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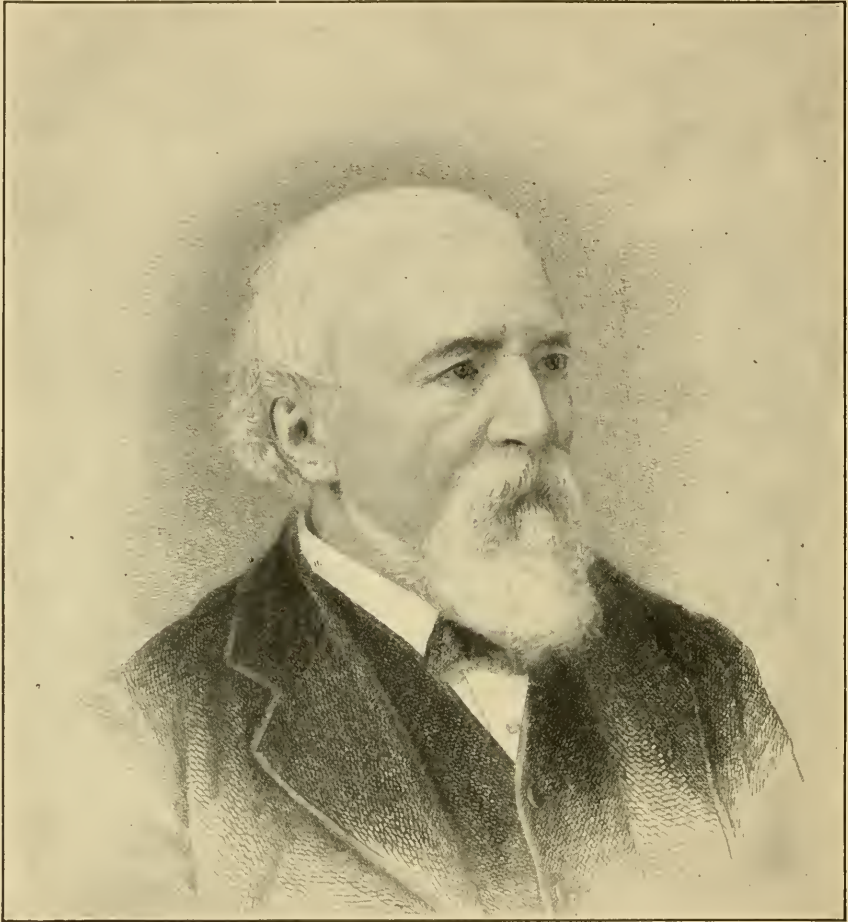
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Robert Browning.

STANDARD LITERATURE SERIES

SELECT POEMS

BY

ROBERT BROWNING

AND

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING

WITH INTRODUCTION AND NOTES

BY

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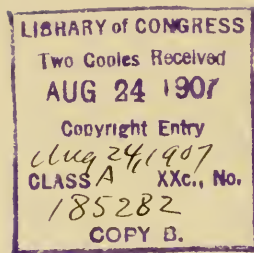
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INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

IN the study of poetry, appreciation is of first importance. This cannot be gained if the pupil must continually interrupt his reading to turn to a dictionary. With this in mind, the introduction to each poem has been carefully prepared to present the situation; and the text has been freely annotated in order to furnish a miniature dictionary ready to the hand of the pupil.

Many pupils have no dictionaries at home, and have little, if any, time for study in school. For these reasons words are explained in the notes that would otherwise have been omitted.

The following simple plan of study is suggested:

1. Read the introduction to a poem.
2. Study the notes carefully.
3. Read the poem.
4. Re-read the poem.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

A DISTINGUISHED contemporary of Browning, William Morris, once said, "For my part I think any biography of men engaged in art and literature is absolutely worthless; their works are their biography." Nevertheless, the leading facts of an author's life help a young student to appreciate the reality and the individuality of a writer, so that whether he studies first the works, or the author behind the works, his interest is the stronger for his acquaintance with the man as well as the author.

Browning's father was a man of the middle classes and in good circumstances. For many years he was employed in the Bank of England. By religion he was a Dissenter. He was fond of music and poetry, and diligent study filled his mind

with the best and the richest thoughts that the world of books could offer. Besides being a lover of poetry, Mr. Browning wrote poetry of no mean order. The heroic couplet was his favorite form, and Pope was his favorite poet. The poet's mother was a sensitive, refined woman. Carlyle called her a type of the true Scotch gentlewoman. She was both intellectual and artistic, as great a lover of music as her husband was of poetry. She had, however, a taste for poetry, but her taste was for the Romanticists. Her strong religious nature and her devotion to her church work were tempered by a broad charity which prevented her becoming narrow and bigoted.

From such parents, in Camberwell, London, May 9, 1812, Robert Browning was born. Browning's childhood was a happy one. Everything went well with him. He was fond of strange pets, and had a large collection of animals. As a very young child he appeared very sensitive to musical impressions. The following anecdote is illustrative of this characteristic: "One afternoon his mother was playing to herself in the twilight. She was startled to hear a sound behind her. Glancing round, she beheld a little white figure distinct against an oak bookcase, and could just discern two large wistful eyes looking earnestly at her. The next moment the child had sprung into her arms, sobbing passionately at he knew not what, but, as his paroxysm of emotion subsided, whispering over and over with shy urgency, 'Play! play!'" His love of nature was early shown by his long rambles in the woods and fields. As he grew older, he was fond of evening rambles. This habit may have helped to develop that mysticism which was later to become such a marked characteristic. Yet he was always in good spirits, though never self-assertive. In the boy were the same hopefulness and confidence that marked the man. He owed much of his cheerful, healthy view of life to his robust health which never failed him.

Browning was sent to school for a time, but the best of his education was obtained from his parents, from tutors, and from the great fields of nature and of literature where he browsed at will. For two years he studied at the University of London, and read at the British Museum, but he never received a university degree. He studied music and art, and at different times thought of devoting himself to each of these

pursuits in turn. His memory of his mother's music made him feel that he wished to become a musician; he recollected his father's drawings, and certain seductive landscapes and seascapes by painters whom he had heard called "the Norwich men," and he wished to be an artist: then reminiscences of the Homeric lines he loved, of haunting verse melodies, moved him most of all. To his mental training were added all kinds of physical exercises. He learned to ride, to dance, to box, and to fence.

Through a mutual friend, Browning met Elizabeth Barrett, whom he afterward married. They were much interested in each other long before their first meeting. Browning once wrote to her, "I love your verses with all my heart, dear Miss Barrett." She replied, "Sympathy is dear—very dear to me; but the sympathy of a poet, and of such a poet, is the quintessence of sympathy!"

Miss Barrett was a great invalid and it was some time before she was able to receive Mr. Browning. Their first meeting took place in May, 1845. Their strong admiration for each other quickly grew into a warm friendship, and that as quickly developed into deep and lasting love. No sweeter, stronger love story has ever been written than that of Elizabeth Barrett and Robert Browning. They were married September 12, 1846.

Mr. Barrett bitterly opposed his daughter's marriage. The result was that the ceremony took place privately, and the couple were beyond the reach of criticism when the announcement was received by their friends. They went to Florence, Italy, where they remained till Mrs. Browning's death in 1861.

Two children were born to them, both sons. Only one of them lived. The surviving son, Robert Barrett Browning, a sculptor and painter, has given to the world the valuable correspondence of his poet parents.

After the death of his wife Browning returned to London, where he spent most of the remaining years of his life, varied by occasional visits to Italy and southern France. He never went back to Florence.

Of the last years of his life William Sharp says: "Everybody wished him to come and dine; and he did his best to gratify Everybody. He saw everything; read all the notable

books; kept himself acquainted with the leading contents of the journals and magazines; conducted a large correspondence; read new French, German, and Italian books of mark; read and translated Euripides and Æschylus; knew all the gossip of the literary clubs, salons, and the studios; was a frequenter of afternoon tea-parties; and then, over and above it, he was Browning: the most profoundly subtle mind that has exercised itself in poetry since Shakspeare."

In 1889, while arranging for the purchase of a villa at Asolo, he was taken ill, and died at his son's home in Venice, December 12, 1889. He was carried to England and buried in Westminster Abbey. Italy, also, honored him. Mr. Sharp says: "It is fitting to know that Venice has never in modern times afforded a more impressive sight, than those craped processional gondolas following the high, flower-strewn funeral-barge through the thronged water-ways and out across the lagoon to the desolate Isle of the Dead." And on the walls of the Palace in which he died, is a memorial tablet upon which is the inscription:

"Open my heart and you will see
Graved inside of it, 'Italy.'"

THE WRITINGS OF BROWNING.

WHILE Browning was a very young boy, he came under the influence of Byron's poetry. Before he was twelve years old he had written a great many verses, but none were published. He was not quite fourteen when he began to read Shelley and Keats. At that time these poets had not won their popularity. Their influence upon him was very strong, and caused a complete revision of his poetic standards.

In 1833, "Pauline, a Fragment of a Confession," was published anonymously. It attracted little attention, but thinkers like John Stuart Mill and Dante Gabriel Rossetti recognized the strong note of a singer in the work.

Many of our greatest poets have shown their genius in spite of circumstances; but with Browning as with Milton, natural gifts were aided from the beginning by the sympathy and ambition of family and friends. As there was but one other

child, a daughter, Browning's parents were amply able to furnish him with the means to devote himself to his chosen work. He resolved to spend his life in study and travel. After a long stay in St. Petersburg he went to Italy, where he began the study of history and literature, which were to exert such a strong influence on his thought.

On his return to England, he finished "Paracelsus." The recognition accorded to this poem gave the author much encouragement. Other poems, both lyric and dramatic, followed in rapid succession. Between his pure lyrics and his dramas stand his dramatic monologues, in which the real excellence and natural versatility of his powers are found.

Browning's readers must have an active dramatic imagination. They must visualize and realize the scene, the speaker, the gestures, the speech. They must identify themselves with the speaker, as in "My Last Duchess," "An Incident of the French Camp," and other similar poems.

"Strafford," his first play, an historical tragedy, was prepared for the stage at the instance of the actor Macready, who himself took the leading part. "A Blot in the 'Scutcheon" appeared five years later. "Pippa Passes" is the simplest of his plays. Pippa is a young silk-winder, who has but one holiday in the year. When the morning dawns, she names over the "Four Happiest" in the town and says,

"I will pass each and see their happiness
And envy none."

She passes first by the house in which one of the "Happiest" lives, but she does not know that this one and her lover have just committed a murder. As Pippa passes she sings,

"God's in his heaven
All's right with the world."

They hear her and the horror of their crime comes over them, and they repent. So Pippa's songs touch the heart of each one of the "Happiest" and influence each to a better life; yet the child goes to sleep wondering whether she ever could come near enough to the lives of the great to

"Do good or evil to them some slight way:"

After his marriage and before the death of his wife, he published "Christmas Eve and Easter Day," and "Men and Women." In 1868-9 he published "The Ring and the Book." It is a story of an Italian murder related by a number of different persons. It met with a hearty reception, first, because it was a fine poem, then, because it was a wonderful picture of the impressions made by one act upon several different persons, and last, because after thirty-five years, the poet's audience was ready for him. His last poem was "Asolando," written the year of his death.

The best way to read Browning's poetry is not to struggle with some obscure and unimportant difficulty of phrase or of thought, but to read what one likes best and find little by little what he has said that belongs to one personally. Read some of the shorter lyrics in this way. The last two lines of "Rabbi Ben Ezra" are the keynote of Browning's inspiration, his cheerfulness in looking at life, and his robust confidence in the blessedness of the life to come:

"Grow old along with me!
The best is yet to be."

BROWNING AS A REPRESENTATIVE POET.

The age to which Browning belonged was one peculiarly favorable to the development of a writer's individuality. It often happens, as in the time of Pope, that one particular mood, or attitude toward life, prevails so strongly that any poet who is not in sympathy with that view finds his genius stifled. A marked characteristic of the Victorian era was its universality. If Tennyson represents its conservatism, and Swinburne and Morris its hopelessness, Browning as truly represents its revolt against the merely conventional and its delight in the investigation of the phenomena of the soul.

GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS OF BROWNING'S POETRY.

While the theme which a writer chooses is determined by his temperament, his method of expression is determined by the mental condition of the age in which he lives. It has been said that had Browning lived some centuries earlier, he would

have been one of the greatest of dramatists. He has certainly two of the essentials of a dramatist: a taste for the objective presentation of human life, and a keen instinct for a dramatic situation. Still, in spite of several attempts, he never wrote a successful play; probably because, in accordance with modern tendency, he interested himself much less in the external manifestations of character than in the inner drama of the soul. This drama he studies with all the interest and minuteness of a scientist. He loves, so to speak, to put a cross-section of the human mind under his microscope and examine it. He endeavors to have the individual studied speak for himself, whether in the passionate cry of the lyric, the lonely brooding of the soliloquy, or the self-justification of the dramatic monologue. In all his poetry, however, we are aware of his own personality; the mask may be that of Pippa or of Cleon, but the voice is the voice of Browning. Even his lyrics are in this sense dramatic; not a personal cry of feeling in which the writer loses his own identity.

The form which suits him best is the dramatic monologue. In the monologue a speaker lays bare his mind to a second person, and the dramatic nature of the presentation is increased by hints as to scenery, action, and the impression made on the mind of the hearer. Sometimes, as in "My Last Duchess," the speaker reveals to us not only his own nature, but that of someone else.

THE DIFFICULTY OF READING BROWNING.

Subject-matter such as Browning's and a treatment such as he has chosen necessarily demand an unusual alertness of intellect on the part of the reader. In most of the dramatic monologues we are in the position of listening to someone telling his own side of a story to another who is already familiar with the facts of the case, or what have been accepted as the facts. We grope blindly for a clew, and often it is not until the end of the poem is reached that we are able to grasp the general situation, much less the connection of thought with thought.

To this source of difficulty must be added Browning's condensed method of expression and the violence he often does to

the language in the matter of syntax and the collocation of words.

Some of his peculiarities of diction are:

1. The suppression of the relative pronoun in both the nominative and the accusative.
2. The use of the infinitive without the sign *to*.
3. The use of the dative, or indirect object, without *to* or *for* carried farther than the custom of the language warrants.
4. The frequent use of the possessive case with nouns of neuter gender.
5. Inverted constructions.
6. The abrupt breaking off of a sentence to admit a long interpolation before the main idea is completed.

A good example of the difficulties with which readers of Browning's dramatic monologues have to contend, is to be found in "My Last Duchess," given on page 93.

The laws of orderly arrangement and plot development are disregarded in order that the Duke, who is represented as speaking, may with more apparent naturalness reveal his own inmost nature and the strongly contrasted nature of her who was once his wife. It is not until very near the close of this monologue, that we learn the circumstances under which it is uttered. The Duke, a man perfect in outward breeding, but the incarnation of cold and selfish pride, is negotiating for a new marriage. He is a connoisseur in art, and vain of the many artistic treasures he possesses. One of these he displays to the ambassador of his prospective father-in-law. It is a masterpiece, indeed, the picture of his "Last Duchess." We are left to imagine the look of delighted wonder in the eyes of the ambassador, which impels the Duke to give utterance to his old discontent at the very sweetness of his wife, her innocent delight in life, and her frank response to every claim upon her sympathy. How impossible to remould such a nature into the cold, indifferent reserve that would have seemed to the Duke most fitting in his Duchess! He tells with cruel complacency of the "commands" by which, with mediæval ruthlessness, he doomed the offending lady's smiles to extinction by death or by the grim walls of a convent. Then, dropping the curtain with which he jealously guards the picture, he returns to the subject of the dowry for which

he had been bargaining. The two men descend the staircase, to rejoin the company below; the Duke putting aside with courtly politeness the ambassador's motion to give him the precedence due his rank. As they pass a window, his eye is caught by a bronze group in the courtyard, and he calls the ambassador's attention to it with precisely the same vanity he has shown in displaying the picture of his wife.

Here, in the short space of fifty-six lines, the poet has contrived to give the outlines of the lady's tragic story, a vivid impression of her beauty and charm, an unforgettable picture of the two characters, and, incidentally, more information about the Italy of the Renaissance than would furnish forth a historical lecture. No wonder if the mind pauses, gasps puzzled and groping, before such a wealth of material so compacted.

Even the following poem, simple narrative as it is, will serve to illustrate the claim Browning makes on the reader's imagination, and the abruptness and condensation so frequently characteristic of his work.

TRAY.

Sing me a hero! Quench my thirst
Of soul, ye bards!

Quoth Bard the first:

"Sir Olaf, the good knight, did don
His helm, and eke his habergeon . . ."
Sir Olaf and his bard——!

"The sin-scathed brow" (quoth Bard the second),
"That eye wide ope as tho' Fate beckoned
My hero to some sleep, beneath
Which precipice smiled tempting Death . . ."
You too without your host have reckoned!

"A beggar-child" (let's hear this third!)
"Sat on a quay's edge: like a bird
Sang to herself at careless play,
And fell into the stream. 'Dismay!
Help, you the standers-by!' None stirred.

“Bystanders reason, think of wives
 And children ere they risk their lives.
 Over the balustrade has bounced
 A mere instinctive dog, and pounced
 Plumb on the prize. ‘How well he dives!

“‘Up he comes with the child, see, tight
 In mouth, alive too, clutched from quite
 A depth of ten feet—twelve, I bet!
 Good dog! What, off again? ‘There’s yet
 Another child to save? All right!

“‘How strange we saw no other fall!
 It’s instinct in the animal.
 Good dog! But he’s a long while under:
 If he got drowned I should not wonder—
 Strong current, that against the wall!

“‘Here he comes, holds in mouth this time
 —What may the thing be? Well, that’s prime!
 Now, did you ever? Reason reigns
 In man alone, since all ‘Tray’s pains
 Have fished—the child’s doll from the slime.’

“And so, amid the laughter gay,
 Trotted my hero off,—old ‘Tray,—
 ‘Till somebody, prerogated
 With reason, reasoned: ‘Why he dived,
 His brain would show us, I should say.

“‘John, go and catch—or, if needs be,
 Purchase that animal for me!
 By vivisection, at expense
 Of half-an-hour and eighteen pence,
 How brain secretes dog’s soul, we’ll see!’”

Here we have, first, the three bards and the auditor whom they attempt to please with their tales, merely a preliminary statement in dramatic form of the kind of heroism Browning thinks most worthy a poet’s attention. The first bard begins, after the manner of the mediæval romances, a story of an

adventurous knight. He is contemptuously stopped. That is not the sort of hero desired. The second bard begins a description of the grand, glowing, sin-stained hero such as Byron loved to picture. He, too, is stopped abruptly. The third bard begins, "beggär-child," and is allowed to proceed. It is as though Browning said,—“Let us take heroism in its simplest form, freed from all grandeur of circumstance.”

From this point the story proceeds in orderly fashion enough, but with haste and brevity. The reader's imagination must supply all detail of the lounging crowd of selfish or indifferent human spectators, who excuse their cowardice by pleading the duty they owe to their families. The reader must picture, too, for himself the eager dog, who leaps at once to the rescue, his mere instinct not serving to provide him with excuses for neglecting an obvious duty. The rescue is made, and the dog leaps again, risking his life to restore to the child her treasured toy. He reappears with the doll in his mouth and the bystanders laugh with good-natured contempt, that he should have ventured so bravely for what seems to them such a trifle.

So the story might end, but does not. At the last Browning has prepared a shock of surprise and horror with which to enforce his moral, the wickedness of vivisection.

BROWNING'S PHILOSOPHY.

It is the substance, more than the form, of Browning's work that has won him a noble place in literature. He regarded himself as one who had discovered new truth about life and considered it his mission as poet to interpret that truth to other men. Like Moses, he “smote the rock and gave the water”; the awkwardness or gracefulness of the gesture with which he did it mattered little.

It is therefore advisable that the student should have some idea of what may be called Browning's philosophy.

First, then, as has already been said, Browning regards man as the crown of creation and considers the development of man's soul as the purpose of life. Second, he believes that the purpose is being fulfilled. But right here comes in a difficulty. Every individual life seems to end in defeat. Protus,

the King, who represents what we consider success in the outer life, and Cleon, the sage, who represents what we call success in the inner life, both acknowledge that life has proved unsatisfactory, unable to fulfill the infinite desire for joy that man feels within him. What is the solution? Browning answers: immortality. And one reason for his strong faith in the Christian religion is the assurance which that faith gives of a life after death. But Browning assumes more than Christianity teaches in regard to the nature of our immortality. The soul, he believes, must go on struggling and attaining through a series of existences until it shall reach perfection of power and bliss. Evil is merely imperfection, "good in the making." "The evil is null, is nought, is silence implying sound." In the meantime, contentment is ignoble. Apparent perfection means that the ideal striven for is not high enough, else it would be unattainable. "A man's reach should exceed his grasp, or what's a heaven for?" Andrea del Sarto, called the perfect painter, sadly concedes that the faulty work of his less gifted competitors is greater than his because inspired by a higher ideal.

It is Browning's strenuous inculcation of the necessity for a high ideal and for heroic struggle to attain that ideal, which has made his work such an influence upon the life of his time and which has prompted his admirers to such words as these:

"Among the whole English speaking people, in proportion as they grow in thought and in spirituality and in the love of men and women, the recognition and the praise of the main body of Browning's poetry will also grow into a power the result of which we cannot as yet conceive."

STOPFORD BROOKE,

Contemporary Review, January, 1890.

POETIC FORM.

RHYTHM.

RHYTHMICAL expression is the earliest as well as the most natural form of expression. The oldest existing piece of literature in every language, so far as is known, is in metrical form. All sounds in nature are rhythmical; these sounds

appealed to primeval man, and the rhythm of nature was imitated in the first vocalized expressions of human thought.

Rhythm may be defined as the regular rise and fall of sound, the recurrence, at stated intervals, of emphasized syllables in poetry. The beat of the waves on the seashore, the accenting of notes in music, all such regular repetitions of stress, follow the law of rhythm. In the Anglo-Saxon poetry, this stress always fell on the words expressing the most important ideas in the verse. There were two of these words in the first half of the verse and one in the last half. In modern English poetry, while the important words are accented, the stress frequently falls on the least important words as well.

These emphasized syllables form natural divisions in a line or verse of poetry. Combined with the lighter syllables immediately preceding or following, they form groups of syllables known as feet or measures. Hence the word metre, which means measure. So we call "metrical" in literature whatever can be measured by such groups of syllables. To read a line so as to show the number and kind of these groups, is to *scan* the line.

The most common kinds of metrical feet are the *iambus*, the *trochee*, the *anapest*, the *dactyl*, and the *spondee*. The *spondee*, however, is not so frequent nor so easily distinguished in English verse as in Latin and Greek verse.

The *iambus* consists of two syllables, the first unaccented, the second accented. It may be indicated as follows: $\cup \text{ — } | \cup \text{ — }.$

“Ăll sēr | vīce rānks | thē sāmē | wīth Gód” |

The *trochee* consists of two syllables, the first of which is accented, and the second unaccented: $\acute{\text{e}}\text{u}|\text{é}\text{u}$.

"Gíve hěr | bŭt ă | lēāst ěx | cŭse tŏ | lŏve mě"

The *anapest* is a foot of three syllables, the first two unaccented, and the third accented: $\cup\cup\acute{\cup}$.

“Then the time | for which quails | on the corn | land will
each | leave his mate” |

The *dactyl* has three syllables, the first accented, the second and third unaccented: $\text{—} \cup \cup$ ($\text{—} \cup \cup$ | $\text{—} \cup \cup$).

“Jūst fōr ă | hăndfŭl ǒf | sílvēr hě | léft ũs” |

The *spondee* has two long syllables with the accent on the first: —. This measure is always found with some other kind of foot, generally with the dactyl.

Metre is named from the number as well as the kind of feet in a line. A line of two feet is called dimeter; of three feet, trimeter; of four, tetrameter; of five, pentameter; of six, hexameter. Hence the full description of the metre of any poem includes the name of the number, and the name of the kind of feet, as—iambic pentameter, trochaic tetrameter, or dactylic hexameter, and so on.

The contrast between Tennyson's love of order and Browning's disregard of disorder is nowhere more marked than in their rhythm. The almost flawless regularity of Tennyson's rhythm makes us wonder, at first reading, whether what Browning has written is always poetry.

Browning's versification has a quality of its own. His rhythm is often irregular and halting. It is sometimes necessary to read and re-read, and grasp the whole idea before we can fall into the swing of the verse. It oftens jars and jangles.

In "Pheidippides," trochee, anapest, and iambus are indiscriminately mingled, with an extra syllable at the beginning or at the end of a line.

There are also sudden changes of form, as the thought or the emotion of the poet changes.

The following lines from "The Ring and the Book" are a good example of Browning's strength and ruggedness:

"Sirs, how should I lie quiet in my grave
Unless you suffer me wring, drop by drop,
My brain dry, make a riddance of the drench
Of minutes with a memory in each?"

Harsh and dissonant lines are found even in "Rabbi Ben Ezra,"

"Irks eare the crop-full bird?
Frets doubt the maw-crammed beast?"

In "Sordello" are the following:

"The troubadour who sung
Hundreds of songs, forgot, its trick of tongue,
Its craft of brain."

On the other hand there is much real music and perfect rhythm in Browning's poetry. Notice the regular dactyl of the "Lost Leader," with the trochee or the spondee at the end of alternate lines; the regular cadence and billowlike rhythm of the anapest in "Saul"; and the following lines from "Abt Vogler":

"There shall never be lost one good!
 What was, shall live as before;
 The evil is nill, is naught, is silence implying sound;
 What was good shall be good, with, for evil, so much good
 more;
 On the earth the broken arcs; in heaven, a perfect round."

In descriptions of riding and rapid movement, as in "How They Brought the Good News from Ghent," there is the regular beat; sound and sense are identical. The horses' hoofs strike in perfect time. One reads himself out of breath trying to keep up with the riders.

The smoothness and music of the songs and the love poems have never been surpassed. The expression of his deepest and tenderest emotions proves to us that Browning is a *poet*.

Contrast the "Cavalier Tunes" with "Home Thoughts from Abroad," and with the perfect time of "Home Thoughts from the Sea." The first came from his dramatic imagination; the other two from his heart. "Evelyn Hope," "One Word More," and countless others are heart poems. "One Word More" is almost perfect trochaic pentameter.

BLANK VERSE AND RHYME.

Browning's blank verse is often as perfect as Tennyson's. But his rhymes are his own. They can be compared with no others. He had a most wonderful faculty for all kinds of rhyme, double and triple, grotesque and jocular.

"Blessed was he whose back ached with the jerkin
 His sire was wont to do forest-work in;
 Blessedder he who nobly sunk 'Ohs'
 And 'Ahs' while he tugged on his grandsire's trunk-hose."

Forced rhyme is frequent :

“Fancy the fabric
Quite, ere you build, ere steel strike fire from quartz,
Ere mortar dab brick.”

“Heaven’s success
Found, or earth’s failure :
Hence with life’s pale lure.”

But what can be finer than these lines, and after all what does it matter whether the rhyme be perfect or imperfect if the thought that is meant for us is there?

“No, indeed ! for God above
Is great to grant, as mighty to make,
And creates the love to reward the love :
I claim you still, for my own love’s sake !
Delayed it may be for more lives yet,
Through worlds I shall traverse, not a few :
Much is to learn, much to forget
Ere the time be come for taking you.”

APPRECIATIONS.

Shakespeare is not our poet, but the world’s,
Therefore, on him no speech ! and brief for thee,
Browning ! Since Chaucer was alive and hale
No man has walked along our roads with step
So active, so inquiring eye, or tongue
So varied in discourse. But warmer climes
Give brighter plumage, stronger wing : the breeze
Of Alpine heights thou playest with, borne on
Beyond Sorrento and Amalfi, where
The Siren waits thee, singing song for song.

—WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR.

Tennyson has a vivid feeling of the dignity and potency of law. . . . Browning vividly feels the importance, the greatness and beauty of passions and enthusiasm, and his imagination is comparatively unimpressed by the presence of law and

its operations. . . . It is not the order and regularity in the processes of the natural world which chiefly delight Browning's imagination, but the streaming forth of power, and will, and love from the whole face of the visible universe. . . .

Tennyson considers the chief instruments of human progress to be a vast increase of knowledge and political organization. Browning makes that progress dependent on the production of higher passions and aspirations—hopes, and joys, and sorrows; Tennyson finds the evidence of the truth of the doctrine of progress in the universal presence of a self-evolving law. Browning obtains his assurance of its truth from inward presages and prophecies of the soul, from anticipations, types, and symbols of higher greatness in store for man, which even now reside with him, a creature ever unsatisfied, ever yearning upward in thought, feeling, and endeavor.

. . . Hence, it is not obedience, it is not submission to the law of duty, which points out to us our true path of life, but rather infinite desire and endless aspiration. Browning's ideal of manhood in this world always recognizes the fact that it is the ideal of a creature who never can be perfected on earth, a creature whom other and higher lives await in an endless hereafter. . . .

The gleams of knowledge which we possess are of chief value because they "sting with hunger for full light." The goal of knowledge, as of love, is God Himself. Its most precious part is that which is least positive—those momentary intuitions of things which eye hath not seen nor ear heard. The needs of the highest parts of our humanity cannot be supplied by ascertained truth, in which we might rest, or which we might put to use for definite ends; rather by ventures of faith, which test the courage of the soul, we ascend from surmise to assurance, and so again to higher surmise.—Condensed from EDWARD DOWDEN, *"Studies in Literature."*

Now dumb is he who waked the world to speak,
And voiceless hangs the world beside his bier,
Our words are sobs, our cry or praise a tear:
We are the smitten mortal, we the weak.

We see a spirit on earth's loftiest peak
 Shine, and wing hence the way he makes more clear :
 See a great Tree of Life that never sere
 Dropped leaf for aught that age or storms might wreak ;
 Such ending is not death ; such living shows
 What wide illumination brightness sheds
 From one big heart,—to conquer man's old foes :
 The coward, and the tyrant, and the force
 Of all those weedy monsters raising heads
 When Song is muck from springs of turbid source.

—GEORGE MEREDITH.

There, obedient to her playing, did I read aloud the poems
 Made to 'Tuscan flutes, or instruments more various of our
 own ;
 Read the pastoral parts of Spenser, or the subtle interflowings
 Found in Petrarch's sonnets—here's the book, the leaf is folded
 down !

Or at times a modern volume, Wordsworth's solemn-thoughted
 idyl,
 Howitt's ballad-verse, or Tennyson's enchanted revery,
 Or from Browning some "Pomegranate," which, if cut deep
 down the middle,
 Shows a heart within blood-tinctured, of a veined humanity.

—From "*Lady Geraldine's Courtship*."

BY ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF BROWNING'S WORKS.

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1833. Pauline. | 1842. Italy and France. |
| 1835. Paracelsus. | Camp and Cloister. |
| 1837. Strafford (A Tragedy). | In a Gondola. |
| 1840. Sordello. | Artemis Prologizes. |
| 1841. Bells and Pomegranates, | Waring |
| No. I., Pippa Passes | Queen Worship. |
| 1842. Bells and Pomegranates, | Madhouse Cells. |
| No. II., King Victor and | Through the Metidja. |
| King Charles. | The Pied Piper of Hamelin. |
| 1842. Bells and Pomegranates, | 1843. Bells and Pomegranates, |
| No. III., Dramatic Lyrics. | No. IV., The Return of |
| Cavalier Tunes. | the Druses (A Tragedy). |

1843. Bells and Pomegranates,
No. V., A Blot in the
'Scutcheon (A Tragedy).
1844. Bells and Pomegranates,
No. VI., Colombe's Birth-
day (A Play).
1845. Bells and Pomegranates,
No. VII.:
"How They Brought the
Good News from Ghent to
Aix."
Pictor Ignotus.
The Italian in England.
The Englishmen in Italy.
The Lost Leader.
The Lost Mistress.
Home Thoughts from
Abroad.
The Bishop Orders His
Tomb.
Garden Fancies.
The Laboratory.
The Confessional.
The Flight of the Duchess.
Earth's Immortalities.
Song: "Nay, but You Who
do not Love Her."
The Boy and the Angel.
Night and Morning.
Claret and Tokay.
Saul.
Time's Revenges.
The Glove.
1846. Bells and Pomegranates,
No. VIII., Luria, and A
Soul's Tragedy.
1850. Christmas Eve and Easter-
day.
1852. Introductory Essay to Shel-
ley's Letters.
1855. Men and Women.

VOLUME I.

Love among the Ruins.
A Lover's Quarrel.
Evelyn Hope.
Up at a Villa—Down in the
City.
A Woman's Last Word.
Fra Lippo Lippi.
A Toccata of Galuppi's.

By the Fireside.
Any Wife to Any Husband
An Epistle (Karshish).
Mesmerism.
A Serenade at the Villa.
My Star.
Instans Tyrannus.
A Pretty Woman.
"Childe Roland to the Dark
Tower Came."
Respectability.
A Light Woman.
The Statue and the Bust.
Love in a Life.
Life in a Love.
How it Strikes a Contem-
porary.
The Last Ride Together.
The Patriot.
Master Hugues of Saxe-
Gotha.
Bishop Blougram's Apology.
Memorabilia.

VOLUME II.

Andrea del Sarto.
Before and After
In Three Days.
In a Year.
Old Pictures in Florence.
In a Balcony.
Saul.
"De Gustibus——."
Women and Roses.
Protus.
Holy-Cross Day.
The Guardian Angel.
Cleon.
The Twins.
Popularity.
The Heretic's Tragedy.
Two in the Campagna.
A Grammarian's Funeral.
One Way of Love.
Another Way of Love.
"Transcendentalism."
Misconceptions.
One Word More.

1864. Dramatis Personæ.
James Lee.
Gold Hair.

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1864. The Worst of It.
Dis Aliter Visum.
Too Late.
Abt Vogler.
Rabbi Ben Ezra.
A Death in the Desert.
Caliban upon Setebos.
Confessions.
May and Death.
Prospice.
Youth and Art.
A Face.
A Likeness.
Mistress Sludge, "The Medium."
Apparent Failure.
Epilogue.
1868-69. The Ring and the Book
Book
1871. Balaustion's Adventure. | 1871. Prince Hohenstiel-Schwangau.
1872. Fifine at the Fair.
1873. Red Cotton Night-Cap Country.
1875. Aristophanes' Apology.
1875. The Inn Album.
1876. Pacchiarotto, and other Poems (including Natural Magic and Hervé Riel).
1877. The Agamemnon of Æschylus.
1878. La Saisias, and The Two Poets of Croysic.
1879-80. Dramatic Idyls.
1883. Jocoseria.
1884. Ferishtah's Fancies.
1887. Parleyings with Certain People.
1890. Asolando. |
|---|--|

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 SAINTSBURY, G.—*English Prosody.*
 SHARP, WILLIAM.—*Life of Browning.*
 STEDMAN, EDMUND C.—*The Nature of Poetry.*
 SYMONS.—*Study of Browning.*

DRAMATIC MONOLOGUES.

I.

INCIDENT OF THE FRENCH CAMP.¹

You know, we French stormed Ratisbon:²

A mile or so away,
On a little mound, Napoleon
Stood on our storming-day;
With neck out-thrust,³—you fancy how— 5
Legs wide, arms locked behind,
As if to balance the prone⁴ brow
Oppressive with its mind.

Just as perhaps he mused, "My plans
That soar, to earth may fall, 10
Let once my army-leader Lannes⁵
Waver at yonder wall"—

¹ One of the "Dramatic Lyrics," published in "Bells and Pomegranates," Vol. III., 1842. Ratisbon, the scene of the incident, has been besieged seventeen times since the tenth century, and has suffered several bombardments, the last of which, in April, 1809, was under Napoleon. It is said that the hero of the poem was a man, not a boy; otherwise the story is true: As the Emperor was watching the storming, a rider came from the city at full gallop. Saluting the Emperor, he told him how the French had taken the city. Napoleon's eye flashed with triumph, then saddened as he looked intently at the messenger. "You are wounded," he said. The rider replied, "Nay, Sire, I'm killed," and fell dead at the Emperor's feet.

Imagine a company of French veterans discussing their campaigns with Napoleon, the "Little General," and one of them telling this story.

² *Ratisbon*,—German *Regensburg*,—a city of Bavaria on the south bank of the Danube. It is famous for its mediæval buildings.

³ See portraits for the characteristic posture described in these lines.

⁴ (Lat. *pronus*) bending forward with face downward.

⁵ Jean Lannes, Duc de Montebello, a celebrated Marshal of France under Napoleon. He was mortally wounded at Aspern, May, 1809.

Out 'twixt the battery-smokes there flew
 A rider, bound on bound
 Full galloping; nor bridle drew 15
 Until he reached the mound.

 Then off there flung in smiling joy,
 And held himself erect
 By just his horse's mane, a boy:
 You hardly could suspect— 20
 (So tight he kept his lips compressed,
 Scarce any blood came through)
 You looked twice ere you saw his breast
 Was all but shot in two.

 "Well," cried he, "Emperor, by God's grace 25
 We've got you Ratisbon!
 The Marshal's in the Market-place,
 And you'll be there anon
 To see your flag-bird ⁶ flap his vans ⁷
 Where I, to heart's desire, 30
 Perched him!" The chief's eye flashed; his plans
 Soared up again like fire.

 The chief's eye flashed; but presently
 Softened itself, as sheathes
 A film the mother-eagle's eye 35
 When her bruised eaglet breathes.
 "You're wounded!" "Nay," the soldier's pride
 Touched to the quick, he said:
 "I'm killed, Sire!" And his chief beside,
 Smiling, the boy fell dead. 40

II.

HOW THEY BROUGHT THE GOOD NEWS FROM GHENT TO AIX.¹

I sprang to the stirrup, and Joris, and he;
 I galloped, Dirck galloped, we galloped all three;

⁶ *flag-bird*—the figure of a bird on the top of the staff to which the flag is attached. See the eagle on the staff of the American flag.

⁷ Wings. Derived from the old French *canne*, meaning a wing.

¹ This poem was published in "Dramatic Romances and Lyrics" in 1845.

"Good speed!" cried the watch, as the gate-bolts undrew;
 "Speed!" echoed the wall to us galloping through;
 Behind shut the postern, the lights sank to rest, 5
 And into the midnight we galloped abreast.

Not a word to each other; we kept the great pace
 Neck by neck, stride by stride, never changing our place;
 I turned in my saddle and made the girths tight,
 Then shortened each stirrup, and set the pique² right, 10
 Rebuckled the cheek-strap, chained slacker the bit,
 Nor galloped less steadily Roland a whit.

'Twas moonset at starting; but while we drew near
 Lokeren,³ the cocks crew and twilight dawned clear;
 At Boom,⁴ a great yellow star came out to see; 15
 At Düffeld⁵ 'twas morning as plain as could be;
 And from Meeheln⁶ church-steeple we heard the half-chime,⁷
 So, Joris broke silence with, "Yet there is time!"

At Aershot,⁸ up leaped of a sudden the sun.
 And against him the cattle stood black every one 20

There is no basis in history for the story, but it was not an improbable occurrence in such a country as the Netherlands.

Of the origin of the poem, Browning, himself, says: "There is no sort of historical foundation about 'Good News from Ghent.' I wrote it under the bulwark of a vessel off the African coast after I had been at sea long enough to appreciate even the fancy of a gallop on the back of a certain good horse, 'York,' then in my stable at home."

Observe the perfect rhythm of the poem. The steady beat of hoofs is heard in every line. Recall other poems in which a horse is the hero. Ghent, the capital of the province of East Flanders, Belgium. Aix, a city about 100 miles S. E. of Ghent in a direct line, in the Rhine Province, Prussia; celebrated for its Cathedral and Rathhaus. It is of importance, historically and politically, because of the famous treaties that have been signed there.

² *pique*—sharp peak or point. Of what?

³ *Lokeren*—about 12 miles N. E. of Ghent. Trace the course of the ride on a map.

⁴ *Boom*—about 16 miles S. E. of Lokeren.

⁵ *Düffeld* or *Düffel* is about 6 miles east of Boom.

⁶ *Meeheln* or *Mechlin*—a city once noted for its lace manufactures; it is situated about 8 miles south of Düffeld, on the River Dyle.

⁷ *half-chime*—bell or clock sounding the half hour.

⁸ *Aershot*—15 miles S. E. of Meeheln.

To stare through the mist at us galloping past,
 And I saw my stout galloper Roland at last,
 With resolute shoulders, each butting⁹ away
 The haze, as some bluff river headland its spray:

And his low head and crest, just one sharp ear bent back 25
 For my voice, and the other pricked out on his track;
 And one eye's black intelligence,—ever that glance
 O'er its white edge at me, his own master, askance!¹⁰
 And the thick heavy spume-flakes which aye and anon
 His fierce lips shook upwards in galloping on. 30

By Hasselt,¹¹ Dirck groaned; and cried Joris, "Stay spur!
 Your Roos galloped bravely, the fault's not in her,
 We'll remember at Aix"—for one heard the quick wheeze
 Of her chest, saw the stretched neck and staggering knees,
 And sunk tail, and horrible heave of the flank, 35
 As down on her haunches she shuddered and sank.

So, we were left galloping, Joris and I,
 Past Looz¹² and past Tongres, no cloud in the sky;
 The broad sun above laughed a pitiless laugh,
 'Neath our feet broke the brittle bright stubble like chaff; 40
 Till over by Dalhem¹³ a dome-spire sprang white,
 And "Gallop," gasped Joris, "for Aix is in sight!"

"How they'll greet us!"—and all in a moment his roan
 Rolled neck and croup¹⁴ over, lay dead as a stone;
 And there was my Roland to bear the whole weight 45
 Of the news which alone could save Aix from her fate,
 With his nostrils like pits full of blood to the brim,
 And with circles of red for his eye-sockets' rim.

⁹ *butting*—pushing.

¹⁰ *askance*—sidewise, out of the corner of the eye.

¹¹ *Hasselt*—25 miles S. E. of Aershot.

¹² *Looz*—10 miles south of Hasselt. *Tongres*—about 5 miles east of Looz.

¹³ *Dalhem*—between Looz and Aix, very near Aix.

¹⁴ *croup*—back.

Then I cast loose my buff-coat,¹⁵ each holster let fall,
 Shook off both my jack-boots,¹⁶ let go belt and all, 50
 Stood up in the stirrup, leaned, patted his ear,
 Called my Roland his pet-name, my horse without peer;
 Clapped my hands, laughed and sang, any noise, bad or good,
 Till at length into Aix Roland galloped and stood.

And all I remember is,—friends flocking round 55
 As I sat with his head 'twixt my knees on the ground;
 And no voice but was praising this Roland of mine,
 As I poured down his throat our last measure of wine,
 Which (the burgesses¹⁷ voted by common consent)
 Was no more than his due who brought good news from
 Ghent. 60

III.

HERVÉ RIEL.¹

On the sea and at the Hogue,² sixteen hundred ninety-two,
 Did the English fight the French,—woe to France!

¹⁵ *buff-coat*—a military coat made of buff leather, a thick leather made originally of buffalo skin. This coat replaced the buff-jerkin as the steel armor became less common. It was so thick and unyielding as to be proof against the sword, and even against a pistol ball except at short range.

¹⁶ *jack-boots*—large, heavy boots reaching up over the knee, and serving as defensive armor for the leg; introduced in the seventeenth century.

¹⁷ citizens.

¹ "Hervé Riel" was published in the *Cornhill Magazine*, March, 1871.

Browning wrote this poem as a tribute to French heroism. He received £100 for it, which he contributed to the relief of the starving people of Paris after the siege in 1871. The poem was written at Le Croisic, a little fishing village at the mouth of the Loire, where the hero of the poem had lived.

Some authorities make the story strictly historical. Dr. Furnivall says that the facts were established by the reports of the French Admiralty. Hervé Riel, a Breton sailor of Le Croisic, after the naval battle of La Hogue, in 1692, saved the remains of the French fleet by piloting the ships through the shallows of the Rance, thus preventing their capture by the English. He was permitted to ask any reward he desired, and he asked merely for one day's holiday to visit his wife.

Compare this poem with Tennyson's "Revenge."

Stanza I is a marked example of Browning's inverted construction. Rewrite in prose order and note the effect.

² *Hogue* or *Hague*—a promontory on the N. W. coast of France, projecting into the English Channel.

And, the thirty-first of May, helter-skelter thro' the blue,
Like a crowd of frightened porpoises³ a shoal of sharks
pursue,

Came crowding ship on ship to St. Malo⁴ on the Rance,⁵ 5
With the English fleet in view.

'Twas the squadron that escaped, with the victor in full chase;
First and foremost of the drove, in his great ship, Damfre-
ville;⁶

Close on him fled, great and small,
Twenty-two good ships in all; 10
And they signaled to the place
"Help the winners of a race!

Get us guidance,⁷ give us harbor, take us quick—or, quicker
still,

Here's the English can and will!"

Then the pilots of the place put out brisk and leapt on
board; 15

"Why, what hope or chance have ships like these to pass?"
laughed they:

"Rocks to starboard, rocks to port, all the passage scarred and
scored,

Shall the 'Formidable'⁸ here, with her twelve and eighty
guns

Think to make the river-mouth by the single narrow way,
Trust to enter where 'tis ticklish for a craft of twenty tons, 20
And with flow at full beside?

Now 'tis slackest ebb of tide.

Reach the mooring? Rather say,
While rock stands or water runs,
Not a ship will leave the bay!" 25

Then was called a council straight.
Brief and bitter the debate:

³ Supply "which" after "porpoises."

⁴ A strong fortress and important commercial city on the north coast of the department Ille et Vilaine in Brittany, France.

⁵ *Rance*—a river of Brittany that empties into the English Channel at St. Malo.

⁶ commander of one of the ships.

⁷ *guidance*—a pilot. *Harbor*—protection, shelter. Get us into the harbor.

⁸ the flag-ship, the Admiral's vessel.

“Here’s the English at our heels; would you have them take
in tow

All that’s left us of the fleet, linked together stern and bow,
For a prize to Plymouth Sound?⁹ 30

Better run the ships aground!”

(Ended Damfreville his speech).

Not a minute more to wait!

“Let the Captains all and each

Shove ashore, then blow up, burn the vessels on the
beach. 35

France must undergo her fate.

“Give the word!” But no such word

Was ever spoke or heard;

For up stood, for out stepped, for in struck amid all these
—A Captain? A Lieutenant? A Mate—first, second,
third? 40

No such man of mark, and meet

With his betters to compete!

But a simple Breton¹⁰ sailor pressed by Tourville for the
fleet,

A poor coasting-pilot he, Hervé Riel the Croisickese.¹¹

And, “What mockery or malice have we here?” cries Hervé
Riel: 45

“Are you mad, you Malouins?¹² Are you cowards, fools,
or rogues?

Talk to me of rocks and shoals, me who took the soundings,
tell¹³

On my fingers every bank, every shallow, every swell

’Twixt the offing¹⁴ here and Grève where the river disem-
bogues?

⁹ *Plymouth Sound*—off the southern coast of England, N. W. of La Hogue.

¹⁰ *Breton*—a native of Brittany. *Pressed*—forced to enter the service of the navy. *Tourville*—the French Admiral.

¹¹ a native of Le Croisic.

¹² natives of St. Malo.

¹³ count, enumerate.

¹⁴ *offing*—that part of the open visible sea remote from the shore. *Grève*—sands round Mont St. Michel. See note on l. 52. *Disembogues*—flows into the sea.

Are you bought by English gold? Is it love the lying's for? 50
 Morn and eve, night and day,
 Have I piloted your bay,¹⁵
 Entered free and anchored fast at the foot of Solidor.¹⁶
 Burn the fleet and ruin France? That were worse than
 fifty Hogues!
 Sirs, they know I speak the truth! Sirs, believe me
 there's a way! 55
 Only let me lead the line,
 Have the biggest ship to steer,
 Get this 'Formidable' clear,
 Make the others follow mine,
 And I lead them, most and least, by a passage I know well, 60
 Right to Solidor past Grève,
 And there lay them safe and sound;
 And if one ship misbehave,
 —Keel so much as grate the ground,
 Why, I've nothing but my life,—here's my head!" cries Hervé
 Riel. 65

Not a minute more to wait.

"Steer us in then, small and great!
 Take the helm, lead the line, save the squadron!" cried its
 chief.
 Captains, give the sailor place!
 He is Admiral, in brief. 70
 Still the north-wind, by God's grace!
 See the noble fellow's face
 As the big ship, with a bound,
 Clears the entry like a hound,
 Keeps the passage as its inch of way were the wide sea's pro-
 found! ¹⁷ 75
 See, safe thro' shoal and rock,
 How they follow in a flock,
 Not a ship that misbehaves, not a keel that grates the ground,
 Not a spar that comes to grief!

¹⁵ Bay of St. Michel, N. W. coast of France, east of the mouth of the Rance.

¹⁶ *Solidor*—an old fortress on the mainland.

¹⁷ *profound*—immeasurable space, expanse.

The peril, see, is past, 80
 All are harbored to the last,
 And just as Hervé Riel hollas "Anchor!"—sure as fate
 Up the English come, too late!

So the storm subsides to calm:
 They see the green trees wave 85
 On the heights o'erlooking Grève.
 Hearts that bled are stanch'd with balm.¹⁸
 "Just our rapture to enhance,
 Let the English rake¹⁹ the bay,
 Gnash their teeth and glare askance 90
 As they cannonade away!

'Neath rampired²⁰ Solidor pleasant riding on the Rance!"
 How hope succeeds despair on each Captain's countenance!
 Out burst all with one accord.

"This is Paradise for Hell! 95
 Let France, let France's King
 Thank the man that did the thing!"
 What a shout, and all one word,
 "Hervé Riel!"

As he stepped in front once more, 100
 Not a symptom of surprise
 In the frank blue Breton eyes,
 Just the same man as before.

Then said Damfreville, "My friend,
 I must speak out at the end, 105
 Tho' I find the speaking hard.
 Praise is deeper than the lips:
 You have saved the King his ships,
 You must name your own reward.
 'Faith our sun was near eclipse! ²¹ 110
 Demand whate'er you will,
 France remains your debtor still.
 Ask to heart's content and have! or my name's not Damfre-
 ville."

¹⁸ *stanch'd with balm*—soothed; balm is an ointment or anything that soothes.

¹⁹ search.

²⁰ ramparted, fortified.

²¹ *'faith*—in faith. See the figure of speech in the line.

Then a beam of fun outbroke
 On the bearded mouth that spoke, 115
 As the honest heart laughed through
 Those frank eyes of Breton blue:
 "Since I needs must say my say,
 Since on board the duty's done,
 And from Malo Roads²² to Croisic Point, what is it but
 a run?— 120
 Since 'tis ask and have, I may—
 Since the others go ashore—
 Come! A good whole holiday!
 Leave to go and see my wife, whom I call the Belle Aurore!"
 That he asked and that he got,—nothing more. 125

Name and deed alike are lost:
 Not a pillar nor a post
 In his Croisic keeps alive the feat as it befell;
 Not a head in white and black
 On a single fishing-smack, 130
 In memory of the man but for whom had gone to wrack²³
 All that France saved from the fight whence England bore
 the bell.²⁴
 Go to Paris: rank on rank
 Search the heroes flung pell-mell
 On the Louvre,²⁵ face and flank! 135
 You shall look long enough ere you come to Hervé Riel.
 So for better and for worse,
 Hervé Riel, accept my verse!
 In my verse, Hervé Riel, do thou once more
 Save the squadron, honor France, love thy wife the Belle
 Aurore! 140

²² *Malo Roads*—place of anchorage off the coast of St. Malo. A road differs from a harbor in that it is not sheltered. *Croisic Point*—a promontory near the mouth of the Loire, on the west coast of France.

1. 129—*head*—figure-head on a boat.

²³ ruin.

²⁴ *bore the bell*—was the first or leader, bore the victory.

²⁵ The great palace, art-gallery, and museum in Paris.

IV.

PHEIDIPPIDES: "REJOICE, WE CONQUER."¹

First I salute this soil of the blessed, river and rock!
 Gods of my birthplace, *dæmons*² and heroes, honor to all!
 Then I name thee, claim thee for our patron, co-equal in
 praise³

—Ay, with Zeus⁴ the Defender, with Her⁵ of the *ægis* and
 spear!

Also ye of the bow and the buskin,⁶ praised be your peer, 5
 Now henceforth and forever,—O latest to whom I upraise
 Hand and heart and voice! For Athens, leave pasture and
 flock!

Present to help, potent⁷ to save, Pan—patron I call!

¹ After the failure of the First Persian Invasion, Darius immediately began preparations for another invasion. Meanwhile he sent heralds to Greece to demand earth and water, the usual Persian tokens of submission, from the various states. All the islands and some of the land states submitted. The Athenians threw the herald into a pit used for criminals, called the Barathrum, bidding him get earth thence for himself, while the Spartans flung him into a well for the water. The Persians captured Eretria, and marched toward Athens. No state had sent any assistance to Athens; even those who had refused earth and water seemed too much concerned about their own safety. When the news of the fall of Eretria came, the Athenians sent a runner named Pheidippides to Sparta, who is said to have covered the distance of over 150 miles of mountainous country in two days. The Spartans promised to send their army, but said that they were prevented by religious custom from starting till the full moon, it then being the ninth day.

² *dæmons*—among the Greeks a class of ministering spirits.

³ See "Pan" in l. 8 to complete the construction.

⁴ *Zeus*—the chief god of the Greeks.

⁵ "*Her of the ægis and spear*"—Athena or Minerva, the goddess of wisdom and war. She is represented as wearing a helmet and carrying a shield (*ægis*) and a spear.

⁶ "*ye of the bow and the buskin*"—Apollo, god of the sun and the hunt; Diana, goddess of the moon and of hunting. The buskin was a half boot or high shoe strapped or laced to the ankle and lower part of the leg.

⁷ *potent*—powerful. *Pan*—the Greek god of nature who presided over fields, forests, and flocks. He was represented with head and upper part of the body like an elderly man; the lower part like a goat. Sometimes he had the horns and ears of a goat. He was fond of music and dancing. At noonday he was sleepy. His voice and appearance frightened those who saw him; hence, possibly, our word "panic." See Mrs. Browning's "The Dead Pan."

Archons ⁸ of Athens, topped ⁹ by the tettix,¹⁰ see, I return!
 See, 'tis myself here standing alive, no specter that speaks! 10
 Crowned with the myrtle,¹¹ did you command me, Athens and
 you,

"Run, Pheidippides, run and race, reach Sparta for aid!
 Persia ¹² has come, we are here, where is She?"¹³ Your
 command I obeyed,

Ran and raced: like stubble, some field which a fire runs
 through,

Was the space between city and city: two days, two nights
 did I burn 15

Over the hills, under the dales, down pits and up peaks.

Into their midst I broke: breath served but for "Persia has
 come!

Persia bids Athens proffer slave-tribute, water and earth;¹⁴
 Razed to the ground is Eretria¹⁵—but Athens, shall Athens
 sink,

Drop into dust and die—the flower of Hellas utterly die, 20
 Die with the wide world spitting at Sparta, the stupid, the
 stander-by?

Answer me quick, what help, what hand do you stretch o'er
 destruction's brink?

How,—when? No care for my limbs!—there's lightning in
 all and some—

Fresh and fit your message to bear, once lips give it birth!"

⁸ *archons*—chief magistrates in the Greek states, especially in Athens.

⁹ *topped*—wearing on the head.

¹⁰ *tettix*—the grasshopper, the symbol of old age. The Athenians sometimes wore the golden grasshoppers in their hair, as badges of honor, because these insects are supposed to spring from the ground, and thus they indicated that the people who wore them were sprung from the original inhabitants of the country. Read Tennyson's "Tithonus."

¹¹ Inversion. *Myrtle*—worn by the hero or patriot.

¹² "*Persia has come!*"—Figure.

¹³ *She*—Sparta.

¹⁴ *Water and earth*—"Darius (B. C. 493) sent heralds into all parts of Greece to require earth and water in his name. This was the form used by the Persians when they exacted submission." Rollins' "Ancient History," Vol. II., p. 267.

¹⁵ *Eretria*—one of the principal cities of Eubœa, the largest island in the Ægean Sea, now called Negroponte.

1. 20—*Hellas*—Greece.

O my Athens—Sparta love thee? Did Sparta respond? 25
 Every face ¹⁶ of her leered in a furrow of envy, mistrust,
 Malice,—each eye of her gave me its glitter of gratified hate!
 Gravely they turned to take counsel, to cast for excuses. I

stood

Quivering,—the limbs of me fretting as fire frets, an inch of
 dry wood:

"Persia has come, Athens asks aid, and still they debate? 30
 Thunder, thou Zeus! Athene, are Spartans a quarry beyond
 Swing of thy spear? Phoibos and Artemis,¹⁷ clang them 'Ye
 must!'"

No bolt launched from Olympus! ¹⁸ Lo, their answer at last!
 "Has Persia come,—does Athens ask aid,—may Sparta be-
 friend?"

Nowise precipitate judgment—too weighty the issue at
 stake! 35

Count we not time lost time which lags thro' respect to the
 Gods!

Ponder that precept of old, 'No warfare,¹⁹ whatever the odds
 In your favor, so long as the moon, half-orbed, is unable to
 take

Full-circle her state in the sky!' Already she rounds to it
 fast:

Athens must wait, patient as we—who judgment suspend." 40

Athens,—except for that sparkle,—thy name, I had moldered
 to ash!

That sent a blaze thro' my blood; off. off and away was I back,
 —Not one word to waste, one look to lose on the false and the
 vile!

Yet "O Gods of my land!" I cried, as each hillock and plain,
 Wood and stream, I knew, I named, rushing past them
 again, 45

¹⁶ *Every face*—*every eye*—the Senators.

¹⁷ *Phoibos* or *Phæbus*—Apollo. See l. 5. *Artemis*—Diana.

¹⁸ *Olympus* or *Clympus*—A mountain in Greece supposed to be the home
 of the gods.

¹⁹ A Greek superstition. The Spartans would not undertake anything
 serious before the full of the moon.

"Have ye kept faith, proved mindful of honors we paid you
erewhile?

Vain was the filleted²⁰ victim, the fulsome libation! Too
rash

Love in its choice, paid you so largely service so slack!

"Oak and olive and bay,—I bid you cease to enwreath²¹
Brows made bold by your leaf! Fade at the Persian's foot. 50
You that, our patrons were pledged, should never adorn a
slave!

Rather I hail thee, Parnes,²²—trust to thy wild waste tract!
Treeless, herbless, lifeless, mountain! What matter if slacked
My speed may hardly be, for homage to crag and to cave
No deity deigns to drape with verdure?—at least I can
breathe. 55

Fear in thee no fraud from the blind, no lie from the mute!"

Such my cry as, rapid, I ran over Parnes' ridge;
Gully and gap I clambered and cleared till, sudden, a bar
Jutted, a stoppage of stone against me, blocking the way.
Right! for I minded the hollow to traverse, the fissure
across: 60

"Where I could enter, there I depart by! Night in the
fosse? ²³

Athens to aid? Tho' the dive were thro' Erebos,²⁴ thus I
obey—

Out of the day dive, into the day as bravely arise! No bridge
Better!"—when—ha! what was it I came on, of wonders that
are?

²⁰ *filleted victims*—The fillet was a band of ribbon worn on the head; sometimes, also, a wreath of flowers. The filleted or sacrificial victims were generally decked with ribbons and wreaths. Sometimes the cattle had their horns gilded. *Fulsome*—rich, liberal. *Libation*—any offering of oil or wine poured on the ground in honor of the deity.

²¹ *oak*—a symbol of honor. *Olive*—sacred to Athens. In Greece, the symbol of the highest distinction for a citizen who had deserved well of his country. *Bay*—sign of victory.

²² *Parnes*—a mountain between Attica and Boeotia now called Ozia. According to Herodotus, the hero met the god on Mt. Parthenium in Arcadia. The original seat of the worship of Pan was in Arcadia.

²³ *fosse*—ditch, fissure.

²⁴ *Erebus*—The lower world, the realm of night and the dead.

There, in the cool of a cleft, sat he—majestical Pan! 65
 Ivy²⁵ drooped wanton, kissed his head, moss cushioned his
 hoof;
 All the great God was good in the eyes grave-kindly²⁶—the
 curl
 Carved²⁷ on the bearded cheek, amused at a mortal's awe
 As, under the human trunk, the goat-thighs grand I saw.
 "Halt, Pheidippides!"—halt I did, my brain of a whirl: 70
 "Hither to me! Why pale in my presence?" he gracious
 began:
 "How is it,—Athens, only in Hellas, holds me aloof?
 "Athens, she only, rears me no fane,²⁸ makes me no feast!
 Wherefore? Than I what godship to Athens more helpful of
 old?
 Ay, and still, and forever her friend! Test Pan, trust me! 75
 Go, bid Athens take heart, laugh Persia to scorn, have faith
 In the temples and tombs! Go, say to Athens, 'The Goat-God
 saith:
 When Persia—so much as strews not the soil—is cast into the
 sea,
 Then praise Pan who fought in the ranks with your most and
 least
 Goat-thigh to greaved-thigh, made one cause with the free and
 the bold!' 80
 "Say Pan saith: 'Let this, foreshowing the place, be the
 pledge!' "
 (Say, the liberal hand held out this herbage I bear
 —Fennel,²⁹—I grasped it a-tremble with dew—whatever it
 bode),
 "While, as for thee . . . " But enough! He was gone.
 If I ran hitherto—
 Be sure that the rest of my journey I ran no longer, but
 flew. 85

²⁵ *ivy*—symbol of immortality. *Wanton*—carelessly.

²⁶ *grave-kindly*—Note the use of the double epithet.

²⁷ *carved*—a metaphor.

²⁸ *fane*—temple.

²⁹ *fennel*—plant of southern Europe and the east, used in medicine; has yellow flower, sweet aromatic taste. *bode*—forbode; prophesied, foretold, meant.

Parnes to Athens—earth no more, the air was my road;
Here am I back. Praise Pan, we stand no more on the razor's
edge! ³⁰

Pan for Athens, Pan for me! I too have a guerdon ³¹ rare!

Then spoke Miltiades.³² “And thee, best runner of Greece,
Whose limbs did duty indeed,—what gift is promised thy-
self? 90

Tell it us straightway,—Athens the mother demands of her
son!”

Rosily blushed the youth: he paused: but, lifting at length
His eyes from the ground, it seemed as he gathered the rest
of his strength

Into the utterance—“Pan spoke thus: ‘For what thou hast
done

Count on a worthy reward! Henceforth be allowed thee re-
lease 95

From the racer's toil, no vulgar reward in praise or in pelf!
I am bold to believe, Pan means reward the most to my mind!
Fight I shall, with our foremost, wherever this fennel may
grow,—

Pound—Pan helping us—Persia to dust, and, under the deep,
Whelm her away ³³ forever; and then,—no Athens to
save,— 100

Marry a certain maid, I know keeps faith to the brave,—
Hie to my house and home: and, when my children shall creep
Close to my knees,—recount how the God was awful yet kind,
Promised their sire reward to the full—rewarding him—so!”

Unforeseeing one! Yes, he fought on the Marathon
day: ³⁴ 105

So, when Persia was dust, all cried “To Akropolis! ³⁵
Run, Pheidippides, one race more! the meed is thy due!

³⁰ *on the razor's edge*—in a critical situation.

³¹ *guerdon*—reward; prize.

³² *Miltiades*—The Greek general who defeated the Persian army at Marathon, a plain in Attica, Greece, 18 miles N. E. of Athens.

³³ *whelm away*—submerge.

³⁴ *Marathon day*—day of the battle of Marathon, B. C. Sept., 490. This victory preserved the liberties of Greece.

³⁵ *Akropolis*—the citadel of Athens.

‘Athens is saved, thank Pan,’ go shout!’ He flung down his shield,
 Ran like fire once more: and the space ’twixt the Fennel-field ³⁶
 And Athens was stubble again, a field which a fire runs through, 110
 Till in he broke: “Rejoice, we conquer!” ³⁷ Like wine thro’ clay,
 Joy in his blood bursting his heart, he died—the bliss!
 So, to this day, when friend meets friend, the word of salute
 Is still “Rejoice!”—his word which brought rejoicing indeed.
 So is Pheidippides happy forever,—the noble strong man 115
 Who could race like a god, bear the face of a god, whom a god loved so well,
 He saw the land saved he had helped to save, and was suffered to tell
 Such tidings, yet never decline, but, gloriously as he began,
 So to end gloriously—once to shout, thereafter be mute:
 “Athens is saved!”—Pheidippides dies in the shout for his need. 120

CAVALIER TUNES.

I.

MARCHING ALONG.¹

Kentish ² Sir Byng stood for the King,
 Bidding the crop-headed ³ Parliament swing:

³⁶ *Fennel-field*—Marathon meant fennel-(field).

³⁷ “*Rejoice, we conquer!*”—the sub-title of the poem.

¹ Published in “Bells and Pomegranates” in 1842. Set to music by Willieas Stamford.

Browning’s most successful songs are not truly lyrical but dramatic. He does not express his own feelings but conceives how some other mind would have expressed itself under a given mood. We enjoy the poem when we have caught the dramatic conception rather than, as in the true lyric, when we have caught the mood. The Cavalier Tunes are marked examples of this characteristic. They represent two of Browning’s most conspicuous traits, unconquerable confidence, and courage.

The singers are Royalists who sided with Charles I. in the Civil War.

² *Kentish*—of Kent in southeastern part of England. *Sir Byng*—a type of the country gentleman, loyal to Charles I.

³ *crop-headed*—reference to the short, closely cut hair of the Roundheads. *Swing*—hang.

And, pressing ⁴ a troop unable to stoop
 And see the rogues flourish and honest folk droop,
 Marched them along, fifty-score ⁵ strong, 5
 Great-hearted gentlemen, ⁶ singing this song.

God for King Charles! Pym ⁷ and such carles
 To the devil that prompts 'em their treasonous paroles! ⁸
 Cavaliers, up! Lips from the cup,
 Hands from the pasty ⁹ nor bite take nor sup 10
 Till you're—

Chorus.—Marching along, fifty-score strong,
 Great-hearted gentlemen, singing this song.

Hampden ¹⁰ to hell and his obsequies' knell.
 Serve Hazelrig, ¹¹ Fiennes, and young Harry as well! 15
 England, good cheer! Rupert ¹² is near!
 Kentish and loyalists, keep we not here.

Cho.—Marching along, fifty-score strong,
 Great-hearted gentlemen, singing this song!

Then, God for King Charles! Pym and his snarls 20
 To the devil that pricks on such pestilent carles!
 Hold by the right, you double your might;
 So, onward to Nottingham, ¹³ fresh for the fight,

Cho.—March we along, fifty-score strong,
 Great-hearted gentlemen, singing this song! 25

⁴ *pressing*—urging on or impressing.

⁵ *fifty-score*—a score is twenty.

⁶ *gentlemen*—Royalists.

⁷ *Pym*—John Pym, one of the leaders of the Commons in the reign of Charles I. *Carles*—rude, rustic men; churls.

⁸ *parles*—talks; conversation.

⁹ *pasty*—meat pie.

¹⁰ *Hampden*—John Hampden; associated with Pym. See note on l. 7.

¹¹ *Hazelrig*—with Pym and Hampden in the House of Commons. *Fiennes*—prominent in the political struggles of the time. *Young Harry*—Harry Vane, a Puritan, comptroller of the household of Charles I.; he was beheaded in London, June 14, 1662.

¹² *Rupert*—Prince Rupert, nephew of Charles I.

¹³ *Nottingham*—southern part of Nottinghamshire, gathering-place of the army of Charles I.

II.

GIVE A ROUSE.¹

King Charles, and who'll do him right now?
 King Charles, and who's ripe² for fight now?
 Give a rouse:³ here's, in hell's despite now,
 King Charles!

Who gave me the goods that went since? 5
 Who raised me the house that sank once?
 Who helped me to gold I spent since?
 Who found me in wine you drank once?
Chorus.—King Charles, and who'll do him right now?
 King Charles, and who's ripe for fight now? 10
 Give a rouse: here's, in hell's despite now,
 King Charles!

To whom used my boy George quaff else?
 By the old fool's side that begot him?
 For whom did he cheer and laugh else, 15
 While Noll's⁴ damned troopers shot him?
Cho.—King Charles, and who'll do him right now?
 King Charles, and who's ripe for fight now?
 Give a rouse: here's, in hell's despite now,
 King Charles! 20

III.

BOOT AND SADDLE.

Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!
 Rescue my castle before the hot day
 Brightens to blue its silvery gray.
Chorus.—Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!

¹ The speaker is a typical cavalier of the time of Charles I. Scene—a banqueting hall; the song—a toast to King Charles. The rhyme is forced.

² *ripe*—ready.

³ *rouse*—a toast, or health. *Despise*—scorn; *i. e.*, in scorn of hell.

⁴ *Noll*—nickname of Oliver Cromwell.

Ride past the suburbs, asleep as you'd say; 5
 Many's the friend there, will listen and pray
 "God's luck to gallants that strike up the lay"—
Cho.—Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!"

Forty miles off, like a roebuck at bay,¹
 Flouts Castle Brancepeth the Roundheads' ² array: 10
 Who laughs, "Good fellows ere this, by my fay,³
Cho.—Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!"

Who? My wife Gertrude, that, honest and gay,
 Laughs when you talk of surrendering: "Nay!
 I've better counselors; what counsel they? 15
Cho.—Boot, saddle, to horse, and away!"

THE BOY AND THE ANGEL.¹

Morning, evening, noon, and night,
 "Praise God!" sang Theocrite.

Then to his poor trade he turned,
 Whereby the daily meal was earned.

Hard he labored, long and well; 5
 O'er his work the boy's curls fell.

But ever at each period,
 He stopped and sang, "Praise God!"

¹ *at bay*—facing the enemy when escape is impossible.

² *Roundheads*—the Parliamentary party. The name was applied in derision to people who wore closely cropped hair.

³ *by my fay*—by my faith.

¹ Published in *Hood's Magazine*, Vol. II., 1844, pp. 140-142. Reprinted and revised in "Dramatic Romances and Lyrics," 1845, VII., "Bells and Pomegranates." Another edition in 1863 has an additional couplet, ll. 37, 38; ll. 55, 56, inserted in 1845.

There are three kinds of praise, human, ceremonial, angelic; God wants His praise from the meek and lowly. Observe the contrasting of Gabriel's humillity and Theocrite's ambition.

Read "King Robert of Sicily" (Longfellow). Perhaps both poems are based on a legend of kindred meaning.

See Hazlitt's "Early Popular Poetry," Vol. I.

Then back again his curls he threw,
And cheerful turned to work anew. 10

Said Blaise, the listening monk, "Well done;
I doubt not thou art heard, my son:

"As well as if thy voice to-day
Were praising God, the Pope's great way.

"This Easter Day, the Pope at Rome 15
Praises God from Peter's dome."²

Said Theocrite, "Would God that I
Might praise him in that way, and die!"

Night passed, day shone,
And Theocrite was gone. 20

With God a day endures alway;
A thousand years are but a day.

God said in heaven, "Nor day nor night
Now brings the voice of my delight."

Then Gabriel,³ like a rainbow's birth, 25
Spread his wings and sank to earth;

Entered, in flesh, the empty cell,
Lived there, and played the craftsman well;

And morning, evening, noon, and night
Praised God in place of Theocrite. 30

And from a boy to youth he grew;
The man put off the stripling's⁴ hue:

The man matured and fell away
Into the season of decay:

² *Peter's dome*—St. Peter's at Rome.

³ *Gabriel*—the angel.

⁴ *stripling*—youth.

And ever o'er the trade he bent 35
And ever lived on earth content.

(He did God's will; to him, all one
If on the earth or in the sun.)

God said, "A praise is in mine ear;
There is no doubt in it, no fear: 40

"So sing all worlds,⁵ and so
New worlds that from my footstool go.

"Clearer loves sound other ways:
I miss my little human praise."

Then forth sprang Gabriel's wings, off fell 45
The flesh disguise, remained the cell.

'Twas Easter Day: he flew to Rome,
And paused above Saint Peter's dome.

Into the tiring-room close by
The great outer gallery, 50

With his holy vestments dight,⁶
Stood the new Pope, Theocrite:

And all his past career
Came back upon him clear,

Since, when, a boy, he plied his trade 55
Till on his life the sickness weighed;

And in his cell, when death drew near,
An angel in a dream brought cheer:

And rising from the sickness drear,
He grew a priest, and now stood here. 60

⁵ an allusion to the music of the spheres.

⁶ *dight*—clothed, dressed.

To the East with praise he turned,
And on his sight the angel burned.

"I bore thee from thy craftsman's cell,
And set thee here; I did not well.

"Vainly I left my angel-sphere; 65
Vain was thy dream of many a year.

"Thy voice's praise seemed weak; dropped—
Creation's chorus⁷ stopped!

"Go back and praise again 70
The early way, while I remain.

"With that weak voice of our disdain,
Take up creation's pausing strain.

"Back to the cell and poor employ:
Resume the craftsman and the boy!"

Theocrite grew old at home; 75
A new Pope dwelt in Peter's dome.

One vanished as the other died:
They sought God side by side.

HOME-THOUGHTS, FROM ABROAD.¹

Oh, to be in England
Now that April's there;
And whoever wakes in England
Sees, some morning, unaware,

⁷ *Creation's chorus*—See l. 41.

¹ Published in "Bells and Pomegranates," Vol. VII., 1845.

This poem expresses the poet's love for his native land. The description of the English Spring—April and May—is perhaps the most beautiful description in all Browning's poetry.

Note the different songbirds mentioned.

That the lowest boughs and the brushwood sheaf 5
 Round the elm-tree bole² are in tiny leaf,
 While the chaffinch sings on the orchard bough
 In England—now!

And after April, when May follows,
 And the whitethroat builds, and all the swallows! 10
 Hark, where my blossomed pear-tree in the hedge
 Leans to the field and scatters on the clover
 Blossoms and dewdrops—at the bent spray's edge—
 That's the wise thrush; he sings each song twice over,
 Lest you should think he never could recapture 15
 The first fine rapture!
 And though the fields look rough with hoary dew,
 All will be gay when noontide wakes anew
 The buttercups, the little children's dower
 —Far brighter than this gaudy melon-flower!³ 20

HOME-THOUGHTS, FROM THE SEA.¹

Nobly, nobly Cape Saint Vincent² to the Northwest died
 away;
 Sunset ran, one glorious blood-red, reeking into Cadiz Bay;³
 Bluish 'mid the burning water, full in face Trafalgar⁴ lay;

² *bole*—trunk.

³ *melon-flower*—the brilliant flower of a tropical climate, but not to be compared in the poet's mind with the modest buttercup of his own England.

¹ One of the "Dramatic Romances and Lyrics" published in "Bells and Pomegranates," Vol. VII., 1845.

A pæan inspired by the sight from the sea of Cape Trafalgar and Gibraltar, the one associated with the naval victory gained by the English fleet under Nelson, over the combined French and Spanish fleets; the other, England's greatest stronghold. The patriot, remembering what England through her heroes has done for him, asks himself, "How can I help England?" Not England's beauty, but the valor of her heroes, is celebrated in this poem.

The first four verses make a characteristic Turner picture.

² *Cape St. Vincent*—Southwest extremity of Portugal.

³ *Cadiz Bay*—East of Cape St. Vincent.

⁴ *Trafalgar*—a promontory on the southern coast of Spain, between Cadiz and Gibraltar.

In the dimmest Northeast distance dawned Gibraltar ⁵ grand
 and gray;
 "Here and here did England help me: how can I help Eng-
 land?" ⁶—say, 5
 Whoso turns as I, this evening, turn to God to praise and
 pray,
 While Jove's planet ⁷ rises yonder, silent over Africa.

THE LOST LEADER.¹

Just for a handful of silver he left us,
 Just for a riband to stick in his coat—
 Found the one gift of which fortune bereft us,
 Lost all the others she lets us devote;
 They, with the gold to give, doled him out silver; 5
 So much was theirs who so little allowed:
 How all our copper had gone for his service!
 Rags—were they purple,² his heart had been proud!
 We that had loved him so, followed him, honored him,
 Lived in his mild and magnificent eye, 10
 Learned his great language,³ caught his clear accents,
 Made him our pattern to live and to die!

⁵ *Gibraltar*—a town and fortified promontory on the southern coast of Spain. It guards the entrance to the Mediterranean.

⁶ Expresses the patriot's gratitude to his country.

⁷ *Jove's planet*—the planet Jupiter.

¹ This poem first appeared in "Bells and Pomegranates," Vol. VII., in 1845. It was afterwards reprinted in "Dramatic Lyrics" in 1888.

There is an undoubted reference to Wordsworth in this poem. Yet it applied also to Southey, Charles Kingsley, and others, who were Radicals in their youth and Conservatives in old age. Browning, in a letter to Mr. Grosart, says: "I *did* in my hasty youth presume to use the great and venerated personality of Wordsworth as a sort of painter's model: one from which this or the other particular feature may be selected and turned to account; had I intended more, above all, such a boldness as portraying the entire man. I should not have talked about 'handfuls of silver and bits of ribbon.' These never influenced the change of politics in the great poet."

A great leader has deserted the cause and fallen away from early ideals. His disciples are sorrowful not for their own loss, so much as for the moral deterioration he has suffered.

² *purple*—representing rank.

³ *great language*—an allusion to Wordsworth's power of interpretation.

Shakespeare ⁴ was of us, Milton was for us,

Burns, Shelley, were with us,—they watch from their
graves! ⁵

He alone breaks from the van and the freemen 15

—He alone sinks to the rear and the slaves!

We shall march prospering,—not through his presence;

Songs may inspirit us,—not from his lyre;

Deeds will be done,—while he boasts his quiescence, 20

Still bidding crouch whom the rest bade aspire:

Blot out his name, then, record one lost soul more.

One task more declined, one more footpath untrod,

One more devils'-triumph and sorrow for angels,

One wrong more to man, one more insult to God!

Life's night begins;—let him never come back to us! 25

There would be doubt, hesitation and pain;

Forced praise on our part—the glimmer of twilight,

Never glad confident morning again!

Best fight on well, for we taught him—strike gallantly,

Menace our heart ere we master his own; 30

Then let him receive the new knowledge and wait us,

Pardoned in heaven, the first by the throne!

EVELYN HOPE.¹

Beautiful Evelyn Hope is dead!

Sit and watch by her side an hour.

That is her book-shelf, this her bed;

She plucked that piece of geranium-flower,

Beginning to die too, in the glass; 5

Little has yet been changed, I think:

The shutters are shut, no light may pass

Save two long rays through the hinge's chink.

⁴ This reference to Shakespeare has been criticised as a misrepresentation of Shakespeare's position.

⁵ Note the connection of Milton, Burns, and Shelley with Liberal movements.

¹ Published in "Men and Women" in 1855. Reprinted in "Dramatic Lyrics" in 1863, and again in 1868.

This is a poem of the tenderness and love felt by a man of middle age for a young girl who has died at sixteen. She was not aware of his love,

Sixteen years old when she died!
 Perhaps she had scarcely heard my name; 10
 It was not her time to love; beside,
 Her life had many a hope and aim,
 Duties enough and little cares,
 And now was quiet, now astir,
 Till God's hand beckoned unawares,— 15
 And the sweet white brow is all of her.

Is it too late then, Evelyn Hope?
 What, your soul was pure and true,
 The good stars² met in your horoscope,
 Made you of spirit, fire and dew³.— 20
 And, just because I was thrice as old
 And our paths in the world diverged so wide,
 Each was naught to each, must I be told?
 We were fellow mortals, naught beside?

No, indeed! for God above 25
 Is great to grant, as mighty to make,
 And creates the love to reward the love:
 I claim you still, for my own love's sake!
 Delayed it may be for more lives yet,
 Through worlds I shall traverse, not a few: 30
 Much is to learn, much to forget
 Ere the time be come for taking you.

and was too young to be conscious of any need for love in her own life. The man, whom we may believe an intimate friend of the girl's family, is sitting in the room where the girl lies dead. As he looks at all her little possessions and grieves for the bright young being taken away from her happiness amid her little pleasures and cares, he consoles himself with the belief on which Browning so constantly insists, of the immortality of the soul and of love. The love God has put into his soul for her must in some future life awake an adequate response. He plucks a leaf from her geranium and folds it into her hand that she may "wake and remember, and understand."

² *stars*—a reference to the belief that each one's destiny is ruled by a star. The horoscope is the view of one's life. The meeting or crossing of the stars as seen in the horoscope indicates the touching of two lives.

³ The ancients believed the body to be composed of the four original elements: fire, air (spirit), earth, and water.

But the time will come,—at last it will,
 When, Evelyn Hope, what meant (I shall say)
 In the lower earth, in the long years still, 35
 That body and soul so pure and gay?
 Why your hair was amber, I shall divine,
 And your mouth of your own geranium's red—
 And what you would do with me in fine,
 In the new life come in the old one's stead. 40

I have lived (I shall say) so much since then,
 Given up myself so many times,
 Gained me the gains of various men,
 Ransacked the ages, spoiled the climes;
 Yet one thing, one, in my soul's full scope, 45
 Either I missed or itself missed me:
 And I want and find you Evelyn Hope!
 What is the issue? let us see!

I loved you, Evelyn, all the while!
 My heart seemed full as it could hold; 50
 There was place and to spare for the frank young smile.
 And the red young mouth, and the hair's young gold.
 So, hush,—I will give you this leaf to keep:
 See, I shut it inside the sweet cold hand!
 There that is our secret: go to sleep! 55
 You will wake and remember, and understand.

ONE WORD MORE.¹

I.

There they are, my fifty men and women
 Naming me the fifty poems finished!
 Take them, Love, the book and me together:
 Where the heart lies, let the brain lie also.

¹ This poem was originally appended to the collection "Men and Women."

The poem was written in return for Mrs. Browning's volume of "Sonnets from the Portuguese," in which she expressed her love for Mr. Browning. Browning departs from his chosen objective methods and, speaking in his

II.

Rafael² made a century of sonnets, 5
 Made and wrote them in a certain volume
 Dinted with the silver-pointed pencil
 Else he only used to draw Madonnas:
 These, the world might view—but one, the volume.
 Who that one, you ask? Your heart instructs you. 10
 Did she live and love it all her lifetime?
 Did she drop, his lady of the sonnets,³
 Die and let it drop beside her pillow
 Where it lay in place of Rafael's glory,
 Rafael's cheek so duteous and so loving— 15
 Cheek, the world was wont to hail a painter's,
 Rafael's cheek, her love had turned a poet's?

III.

You and I would rather read that volume,
 (Taken to his beating bosom by it)
 Lean and list the bosom-beats of Rafael, 20
 Would we not? than wonder at Madonnas—
 Her, San Sisto⁵ names, and Her. Foligno,
 Her that visits Florence in a vision,⁶

own person, dedicates to his wife his "fifty men and women," meaning the dramatic monologues of which the volume was composed. He depicts the need which all great artists must have felt of finding a special method of expression for their love, not the method by which they have brought truth or comfort to a public who have ungratefully criticised their work. Then he expresses his love for his wife with a passionate tenderness and sincerity which have seldom, if ever, been surpassed in literature.

² *Rafael*, the painter (1483-1520). He wrote a few sonnets. Those that remain are scrawled on various sketches for the "Disputa," the famous painting of the Vatican. One is in the British Museum. Four sonnets on the back of some studies for wall paper.

³ "*lady of the sonnets*"—Margherita, the baker's daughter, with whom Rafael was in love. Little is positively known of her.

See Mrs. Jameson's "Legends of the Madonnas."

⁴ ll. 21-24—References to Rafael's Madonnas. There were about fifty.

⁵ The San Sisto, or Sistine Madonna, so called because of the representation of St. Sixtus and St. Barbara in the lower part of the picture, is in the Dresden gallery. The Foligno is in the Vatican. A view of the city of Foligno is in the background of the picture.

⁶ Probably the Madonna del Granduca, now in the Pitti gallery in Florence. Rafael represents her as appearing to a votary in a vision.

Her, that's left with lilies in the Louvre ⁷—
 Seen by us and all the world in circle.

25

IV.

You and I will never read that volume.
 Guido Reni,⁸ like his own eye's apple
 Guarded long the treasure-book and loved it.
 Guido Reni dying, all Bologna ⁹ ¹⁰
 Cried, and all the world cried too, "Ours the treasure!" 30
 Suddenly, as rare things will, it vanished.

V.

Dante ¹¹ once prepared to paint an angel:
 Whom to please? You whisper "Beatrice." ¹²
 While he mused and traced it and retraced it,
 (Peradventure with a pen corroded ¹³ 35
 Still by drops of that hot ink he dipped for,
 When, his left-hand i' the hair o' the wicked,¹⁴

⁷ This may be "La Belle Jardinière" from the fact that the Virgin is represented in a garden with lilies among the flowers of it. It is a group of three, mother, child, and St. John.

⁸ *Guido Reni*—a noted painter of Bologna (1575-1642). "That volume" (l. 26) was a book of designs which belonged to Rafael. *Eye's apple*—the pupil, the most precious part.

⁹ *Bologna*—in Italy at the foot of the Apennines.

¹⁰ Guido Reni purchased this book in Rome. It contained 100 designs drawn by *his* hand, and this book Reni left to his heir.

¹¹ *Dante*—the greatest Italian poet (1265-1321). He was a skilful draughtsman and at the death of Beatrice drew an angel on a tablet.

¹² *Beatrice*—Beatrice Portinari was Dante's first and only love. Tradition says that he was but nine years old when he met her, and that he loved her faithfully the rest of his life. She died at the age of twenty-four. His love for her is celebrated in his "La Vita Nuova" and in the "Divine Comedy." Perhaps no woman has ever been celebrated with a more perfect affection than Dante gave to Beatrice. Yet it is hard to say how much is real and how much is the idealization of the poet.

¹³ "*pen corroded*"—refers to the manner in which Dante punished in his great poem those who were his personal enemies. Browning, however, does not seem to think that Dante did this from personal spite as he has been accused of doing.

¹⁴ Cf. "Inferno," Canto 32.

Back he held the brow and pricked its stigma,¹⁵
 Bit into the live man's flesh for parchment,¹⁶
 Loosed him, laughed to see the writing rankle, 40
 Let the wretch go festering through Florence)—
 Dante, who loved well because he hated,
 Hated wickedness that hinders loving,
 Dante standing, studying his angel,—
 In there broke the folk of his *Inferno*.¹⁷ 45
 Says he—"Certain people of importance"
 (Such he gave his daily dreadful line to)
 "Entered and would seize, forsooth, the poet."
 Says the poet—"Then I stopped my painting."

VI.

You and I would rather see that angel, 50
 Painted by the tenderness of Dante,
 Would we not?—than read a fresh *Inferno*.

VII.

You and I will never see that picture.
 While he mused on love and Beatrice,
 While he softened o'er his outlined angel, 55
 In they broke, those "people of importance":
 We and Bice¹⁸ bear the loss together.

VIII.

What of Rafael's sonnets, Dante's picture?
 This: no artist lives and loves, that longs not
 Once, and only once, and for one only, 60
 (Ah, the prize!) to find his love a language
 Fit and fair and simple and sufficient—
 Using nature that's an art to others,
 Not, this one time, art that's turned his nature.

¹⁵ *stigma*—a brand, especially one of disgrace.

¹⁶ refers to no special incident either in the writings or in the life of Dante.

¹⁷ "*Inferno*"—A portion of Dante's greatest work, "The Divine Comedy."

¹⁸ *Bice*—a tender diminutive of Beatrice.

Ay, of all the artists living, loving, 65
 None but would forego his proper dowry—
 Does he paint? he fain would write a poem,—
 Does he write? he fain would paint a picture,
 Put to proof art alien to the artist's,
 Once and only once, and for one only, 70
 So to be the man and leave the artist,
 Gain the man's joy, miss the artist's sorrow.

IX.

Wherefore? Heaven's gift takes earth's abatement! ¹⁹
 He who smites the rock and spreads the water, ²⁰
 Bidding drink and live a crowd beneath him 75
 Even he, the minute makes immortal,
 Proves perchance, but mortal in the minute,
 Desecrates, belike, the deed in doing.
 While he smites, how can he but remember,
 So he smote before, in such a peril, 80
 When they stood and mocked—"Shall smiting help us?"
 When they drank and sneered—"A stroke is easy!"
 When they wiped their mouths and went their journey,
 Throwing him for thanks—"But drought was pleasant."
 Thus old memories mar the actual triumph; 85
 Thus the doing savors of disrelish;
 Thus achievement lacks a gracious somewhat;
 O'er-importuned brows becloud the mandate,
 Carelessness or consciousness—the gesture.
 For he bears an ancient wrong about him, 90
 Sees and knows again those phalanxed faces,
 Hears, yet one time more, the 'customed prelude—
 "How shouldst thou, of all men, smite, and save us?" ²¹
 Guesses what is like to prove the sequel—
 "Egypt's flesh-pots—nay, the drought was better." ²² 95

¹⁹ Fame brings pain to the genius.

²⁰ Cf. Numbers xx.

²¹ Three times before Moses smote the rock he had helped the Israelites from great troubles. He is used here as a type rather than as an individual.

²² Cf. Exodus xvi. 3.

X.

Oh, the crowd must have emphatic warrant!
 Theirs, the Sinai-forehead's cloven brilliance,²³
 Right-arm's rod-sweep, tongue's imperial fiat.²⁴
 Never does the man put off the prophet.

XI.

Did he love one face from out the thousands, 100
 (Were she Jethro's daughter,²⁵ white and wifely,
 Were she but the Æthiopian bondslave),
 He would envy yon dumb patient camel,²⁶
 Keeping a reserve of scanty water
 Meant to save his own life in the desert; 105
 Ready in the desert to deliver
 (Kneeling down to let his breast be opened)
 Hoard and life together for his mistress.

XII.

I shall never, in the years remaining,
 Paint you pictures, no, nor carve you statues, 110
 Make you music that should all-express me;
 So it seems: I stand on my attainment
 This of verse alone, one life allows me;
 Verse and nothing else have I to give you.
 Other heights in other lives, God willing: 115
 All the gifts from all the heights, your own, Love!

XIII.

Yet a semblance of resource avails us—
 Shade so finely touched, love's sense must seize it.
 Take these lines, look lovingly and nearly,
 Lines I write the first time and the last time. 120

²³ These compounds are in accordance with German usage. For the allusion cf. Exodus xxxiv. 29, 30.

²⁴ More compounds. Allusion: Numbers xx. 11.

²⁵ *Jethro's daughter*—Zipporah, Moses' wife. Cf. Exodus ii. 21.

²⁶ Numbers xii. 1.

He who works in fresco steals a hair-brush,
 Curbs the liberal hand, subservient proudly,
 Cramps his spirit, crowds its all in little,
 Makes a strange art of an art familiar,
 Fills his lady's missal-marge ²⁷ with flowerets. 125
 He who blows through bronze may breathe through silver,
 Fitly serenade a slumbrous princess.
 He who writes, may write for once as I do.

XIV.

Love, you saw me gather men and women,
 Live or dead or fashioned by my fancy: 130
 Enter each and all, and use their service;
 Speak from every mouth;—the speech, a poem.
 Hardly shall I tell my joys and sorrows,
 Hopes and fears, belief and disbelieving;
 I am mine and yours—the rest be all men's; 135
 Karshish,²⁸ Cleon, Norbert, and the fifty.
 Let me speak this once in my true person,
 Not as Lippo,²⁹ Roland or Andrea,
 Though the fruit of speech be just this sentence:
 Pray you, look on these my men and women, 140
 Take and keep my fifty poems finished;
 Where my heart lies, let my brain lie also!
 Poor the speech; be how I speak, for all things.

XV.

Not but that you know me! Lo, the moon's self!
 Here in London, yonder late in Florence, 145
 Still we find her face, the thrice-transfigured.
 Curving on a sky imbrued with color,

²⁷ *missal-marge*—the margin of a prayer-book. Formerly the margins used to be beautifully illuminated.

²⁸ *Karshish*—changed from Karshook; in Hebrew it means a thistle. See "Ben Karshook's Vision." *Cleon* is the hero of the poem of that name ("Men and Women"). *Norbert* is the hero of "In a Balcony" ("Men and Women").

²⁹ *Lippo*—the painter in "Fra Lippo Lippi." *Roland*—in "Childe Roland to the Dark Tower Came." *Andrea*—in "Andrea del Sarto."

Drifted over Fiesole ³⁰ by twilight,
 Came she, our new crescent of a hair's-breadth.
 Full she flared it, lamping Samminiato,³¹ 150
 Rounder 'twixt the cypresses and rounder,
 Perfect till the nightingales applauded.
 Now, a piece of her old self, impoverished,
 Hard to greet, she traverses the house-roofs,
 Hurries with unhandsome thrift of silver 155
 Goes dispiritedly, glad to finish.

XVI.

What, there's nothing in the moon noteworthy?
 Nay; for if that moon could love a mortal,³²
 Use, to charm him (so to fit a fancy),
 All her magic ('tis the old sweet mythos),³³ 160
 She would turn a new side to her mortal
 Side unseen of herdsman, huntsman, steersman—
 Blank to Zoroaster ³⁴ on his terrace,
 Blind to Galileo ³⁵ on his turret,
 Dumb to Homer,³⁶ dumb to Keats—him, even! 165
 Think, the wonder of the moonstruck mortal—
 When she turns round, comes again in heaven,
 Opens out anew for worse or better!
 Proves she like some portent of an iceberg
 Swimming full upon the ship it founders, 170
 Hungry with huge teeth of splintered crystals?
 Proves she as the paved work of a sapphire ³⁷
 Seen by Moses when he climbed the mountain?
 Moses, Aaron, Nadab and Abihu ³⁸
 Climbed and saw the very God, the Highest, 175

³⁰ *Fiesole*—three miles north of Florence.

³¹ *Samminiato*—San Miniato, a well-known church in Florence.

³² Cf. the love of the moon for Endymion.

³³ *mythos*—myth.

³⁴ *Zoroaster*—said to be the founder of the Persian Religion, and compiler of the sacred books of the Zend-Avesta.

³⁵ *Galileo*—the great Italian astronomer.

³⁶ *Homer*—the Greek poet. Keats and Shelley were favorite poets with Browning before they were read much by the public at large. Undoubtedly he was much influenced by them.

³⁷ Cf. Exodus xxiv. 10.

³⁸ Cf. Exodus xxiv. 9 and the following verses.

Stand upon the paved work of a sapphire.
 Like the bodied heaven in his clearness
 Shone the stone, the sapphire of that paved work,
 When they ate and drank and saw God also!

XVII.

What were seen? None knows, none ever shall know. 180
 Only this is sure—the sight were other;
 Not the moon's same side, born late in Florence,
 Dying now impoverished here in London.
 God be thanked, the meanest of his creatures
 Boasts two soul-sides; one to face the world with; 185
 One to show a woman when he loves her!

XVIII.

This I say of me, but think of you, Love!
 This to you—yourself my moon of poets!
 Ah, but that's the world's side, there's the wonder;
 Thus they see you, praise you, think they know you! 190
 There, in turn I stand with them and praise you—
 Out of my own self, I dare to phrase it.
 But the best is when I glide from out them,
 Cross a step or two of dubious twilight
 Come out on the other side, the novel 195
 Silent silver lights and darks undreamed of,
 Where I hush and bless myself with silence.

XIX.

Oh, their Rafael of the dear Madonnas;
 Oh, their Dante of the dread Inferno,
 Wrote one song—and in my brain I sing it; 200
 Drew one angel—borne, see, on my bosom!

R. B.

THE PIED PIPER OF HAMELIN.

I.

HAMELIN town's in Brunswick,
By famous Hanover city;
The river Weser, deep and wide,
Washes its walls on either side;
A pleasanter spot you never spied;
But, when begins my ditty,
Almost five hundred years ago,
To see the townsfolk suffer so
From vermin, was a pity.

II.

Rats!
They fought the dogs and killed the cats,
And bit the babies in the cradles,
And ate the cheeses out of the vats,
And licked the soup from the cooks' own ladles,
Split open the kegs of salted sprats,
Made nests inside men's Sunday hats,
And even spoiled the women's chats
By drowning their speaking
With shrieking and squeaking
In fifty different sharps and flats.

III.

At last the people in a body
To the Town Hall came flocking:
" 'Tis clear," cried they, "our Mayor's a noddy;
And as for our Corporation, shocking
To think we buy gowns lined with ermine
For dolts that can't or won't determine
What's best to rid us of our vermin!
You hope, because you're old and obese,
To find in the furry civic robe ease!
Rouse up, sirs! give your brains a racking

To find the remedy we're lacking,
Or, sure as fate, we'll send you packing!"
At this the Mayor and Corporation
Quaked with a mighty consternation.

IV.

An hour they sat in council;
At length the Mayor broke silence:
"For a guilder I'd my ermine gown sell,
I wish I were a mile hence!
It's easy to bid one rack one's brain—
I'm sure my poor head aches again,
I've scratched it so and all in vain.
Oh for a trap, a trap, a trap!"
Just as he said this, what should hap
At the chamber door but a gentle tap?
"Bless us," cried the Mayor, "what's that?"
(With the Corporation as he sat,
Looking little, though wondrous fat;
Nor brighter was his eye, nor moister
Than a too-long-opened oyster,
Save when at noon his paunch grew mutinous
For a plate of turtle, green and glutinous.)
"Only a scraping of shoes on the mat?
Anything like the sound of a rat
Makes my heart go pit-a-pat!"

V.

"Come in!" the Mayor cried, looking bigger:
And in did come the strangest figure!
His queer long coat from heel to head
Was half of yellow and half of red,
And he himself was tall and thin,
With sharp blue eyes, each like a pin,
With light loose hair, yet swarthy skin,
No tuft on cheek, nor beard on chin,
But lips where smiles went out and in;
There was no guessing his kith and kin:
And nobody could enough admire

The tall man and his quaint attire.
Quoth one: "It's as my great grandsire,
Starting up at the Trump of Doom's tone,
Had walked his way from his painted tombstone!"

VI.

He advanced to the council-table:
And, "Please your honors," said he, "I'm able,
By means of a secret charm, to draw
All creatures living beneath the sun,
That creep or swim or fly or run,
After me so as you never saw!
And I chiefly use my charm
On creatures that do people harm,
The mole and toad and newt and viper;
And people call me the Pied Piper."
(And here they noticed round his neck
A scarf of red and yellow stripe,
To match with his coat of self-same check:
And at the scarf's end hung a pipe;
And his fingers, they noticed, were ever straying,
As if impatient to be playing
Upon his pipe as low it dangled
Over his vesture so old-fangled.)
"Yet," said he, "poor piper as I am,
In Tartary I freed the Cham,
Last June, from his huge swarms of gnats;
I eased in Asia the Nizam
Of a monstrous brood of vampire-bats:
And as for what your brain bewilders,
If I can rid your town of rats
Will you give me a thousand guilders?"
"One, fifty thousand!" was the exclamation
Of the astonished Mayor and Corporation.

VII.

Into the street the Piper stept,
Smiling first a little smile,
As if he knew what magic slept,
In his quiet pipe the while:
Then, like a musical adept,

To blow the pipe his lips he wrinkled,
And green and blue his sharp eyes twinkled,
Like a candle-flame where salt is sprinkled;
And ere three shrill notes the pipe uttered,
You heard as if an army muttered:
And the muttering grew to a grumbling;
And the grumbling grew to a mighty rumbling;
And out of the houses the rats came tumbling.
Great rats, small rats, lean rats, brawny rats,
Brown rats, black rats, gray rats, tawny rats,
Grave old plodders, gay young friskers,
Fathers, mothers, uncles, cousins,
Cocking tails and pricking whiskers,
Families by tens and dozens,
Brothers, sisters, husbands, wives—
Followed the Piper for their lives.
From street to street he piped advancing,
And step for step they followed dancing,
Until they came to the river Weser,
Wherein all plunged and perished!
—Save one, who, stout as Julius Cæsar,
Swam across and lived to carry
(As he the manuscript he cherished)
To Rat-land home his commentary:
Which was: “At the first shrill notes of the pipe,
I heard a sound as of scraping tripe,
And putting apples, wondrous ripe,
Into a cider press’s gripe;
And a moving away of pickle-tub-boards,
And a leaving ajar of conserve-cupboards,
And a drawing the corks of train-oil-flasks,
And a breaking the hoops of butter-casks:
And it seemed as if a voice
(Sweeter far than by harp or by psaltery
Is breathed) called out, ‘Oh, rats, rejoice!
The world is grown to one vast dysaltery!
So munch on, crunch on, take your nuncheon,
Breakfast, supper, dinner, luncheon!’
And just as a bulky sugar-puncheon,
Already staved, like a great sun shone

Glorious scarce an inch before me,
Just as methought it said, 'Come, bore me!'
—I found the Weser rolling o'er me."

VIII.

You should have heard the Hamelin people
Ringing the bells till they rocked the steeple.
"Go," cried the Mayor, "and get long poles,
Poke out the nests and block up the holes!
Consult with carpenters and builders,
And leave in our town not even a trace
Of the rats!"—when suddenly, up the face
Of the Piper perked in the market-place,
With a, "First, if you please, my thousand guilders!"

IX.

A thousand guilders! The Mayor looked blue;
So did the Corporation, too.
For council dinners made rare havoc
With Claret, Moselle, Vin-de-grave, Hock;
And half the money would replenish
Their cellar's biggest butt with Rhenish.
To pay this sum to a wandering fellow
With a gypsy coat of red and yellow!
"Beside," quoth the Mayor, with a knowing wink,
"Our business was done at the river's brink;
We saw with our eyes the vermin sink,
And what's dead can't come to life, I think.
So, friend, we're not the folks to shrink
From the duty of giving you something for drink,
And a matter of money to put in your poke;
But as for the guilders, what we spoke
Of them, as you very well know, was in joke.
Beside, our losses have made us thrifty.
A thousand guilders! Come, take fifty!"

X.

The Piper's face fell, and he cried,
"No trifling! I can't wait! Beside,
I've promised to visit by dinner-time
Bagdat, and accept the prime
Of the Head-Cook's pottage, all he's rich in,
For having left, in the Caliph's kitchen,
Of a nest of scorpions no survivor:
With him I proved no bargain-driver;
With you, don't think I'll bate a stiver!
And folks who put me in a passion
May find me pipe after another fashion."

XI.

"How?" cried the Mayor, "d'ye think I brook
Being worse treated than a cook?
Insulted by a lazy ribald
With idle pipe and vesture piebald?
You threaten us, fellow? Do your worst!
Blow your pipe there till you burst!"

XII.

Once more he stept into the street,
And to his lips again
Laid his long pipe of smooth straight cane;
And ere he blew three notes (such sweet,
Soft notes as yet musician's cunning
Never gave the enraptured air)
There was rustling that seemed like a bustling
Of merry crowds justling and pitching and hustling;
Small feet were pattering, wooden shoes clattering,
Little hands clapping, and little tongues chattering.
And, like fowls in a farm-yard, when barley is scattering,
Out came the children running.
All the little boys and girls,
With rosy cheeks and flaxen curls,
And sparkling eyes and teeth like pearls,
Tripping and skipping, ran merrily after
The wonderful music with shouting and laughter.

XIII.

The Mayor was dumb, and the Council stood
As if they were changed into blocks of wood.
Unable to move a step, or cry
To the children merrily skipping by,
—Could only follow with the eye
That joyous crowd at the piper's back.
But how the Mayor was on the rack,
And the wretched Council's bosom beat,
As the Piper turned from the High Street,
To where the Weser rolled its waters,
Right in the way of their sons and daughters!
However, he turned from South to West,
And to Koppelberg Hill his steps addressed,
And after him the children pressed:
Great was the joy in every breast.
"He never can cross that mighty top!
He's forced to let the piping drop,
And we shall see our children stop."
When lo, as they reached the mountain-side,
A wondrous portal opened wide,
As if a cavern were suddenly hollowed;
And the Piper advanced, and the children followed,
And when all were in, to the very last,
The door in the mountain-side shut fast.
Did I say all? No! One was lame,
And could not dance the whole of the way;
And in after years, if you would blame
His sadness, he was used to say,—
"It's dull in our town since my playmates left!
I can't forget that I'm bereft
Of all the pleasant sights they see,
Which the Piper also promised me.
For he led us, he said, to a joyous land,
Joining the town, and just at hand,
Where waters gushed and fruit-trees grew,
And flowers put forth a fairer hue,
And everything was strange and new,
The sparrows were brighter than peacocks here,
And their dogs outran our fallow deer,

And honey-bees had lost their stings,
And horses were born with eagles' wings;
And just as I became assured
My lame foot would be speedily cured,
The music stopped and I stood still,
And found myself outside the hill,
Left alone against my will,
To go now limping as before,
And never hear of that country more!"

XIV.

Alas, alas for Hamelin!

There came into many a burgher's pate
A text which says that Heaven's gate
Opes to the rich at as easy a rate
As the needle's eye takes a camel in!
The Mayor sent East, West, North, and South,
To offer the Piper, by word of mouth,
Wherever it was men's lot to find him,
Silver and gold to his heart's content,
If he'd only return the way he went.

And bring the children behind him.
But when they saw 'twas a lost endeavor,
And Piper and dancers were gone forever,
They made a decree that lawyers never
Should think their records dated duly,
If, after the day of the month and year,
These words did not as well appear.

"And so long after what happened here
On the twenty-second of July,
Thirteen hundred and seventy-six;"
And the better in memory to fix
The place of the children's last retreat,
They called it the Pied Piper's Street—
Where any one playing on pipe or tabor
Was sure for the future to lose his labor.
Nor suffered they hostelry or tavern
To shock with mirth a street so solemn;
But opposite the place of the cavern
They wrote the story on a column,

And on the great church window painted
 The same, to make the world acquainted
 How their children were stolen away,
 And there it stands to this very day.
 And I must not omit to say
 That in Transylvania there's a tribe
 Of alien people who ascribe
 The outlandish ways and dress
 On which our neighbors lay much stress,
 To their fathers and mothers having risen
 Out of some subterraneous prison
 Into which they were trepanned
 Long ago in a mighty band
 Out of Hamelin town in Brunswick land,
 But how or why, they don't understand.

XV.

So, Willy, let me and you be wipers
 Of scores out with all men—especially pipers!
 And, whether they pipe us free from rats or from mice,
 If we've promised them aught, let us keep our promise.

RABBI BEN EZRA.

Grow old along with me!
 The best is yet to be,
 The last of life, for which the first was made:
 Our times are in His hand
 Who saith, "A whole I planned,
 Youth shows but half; trust God: see all, nor be afraid."

Not that, amassing flowers,
 Youth sighed, "Which rose make ours,
 Which lily leave and then as best recall!"
 Not that, admiring stars,
 It yearned "Nor Jove. nor Mars;
 Mine be some figured flame which blends, transcends them
 all!"

Not for such hopes and fears
 Annulling youth's brief years,
 Do I remonstrate: folly wide the mark!
 Rather I prize the doubt,
 Low kinds exist without,
 Finished and finite clods, untroubled by a spark.

Poor vaunt of life indeed,
 Were man but formed to feed
 On joy, to solely seek and find and feast:
 Such feasting ended, then
 As sure an end to men;
 Irks care the crop-full bird? Frets doubt the maw-crammed
 beast?

Rejoice we are allied
 To That which doth provide
 And not partake, effect and not receive!
 A spark disturbs our clod;
 Nearer we hold of God
 Who gives, than of His tribes that take, I must believe.

Then, welcome each rebuff
 That turns earth's smoothness rough,
 Each sting that bids nor sit nor stand but go!
 Be our joys three-parts pain!
 Strive, and hold cheap the strain;
 Learn, nor account the pang; dare, never grudge the throe!

For thence,—a paradox
 Which comforts while it mocks,—
 Shall life succeed in that it seems to fail:
 What I aspired to be,
 And was not, comforts me:
 A brute I might have been, but would not sink i' the scale.

What is he but a brute
 Whose flesh has soul to suit,
 Whose spirit works lest arms and legs want play?
 To man, propose this test—
 Thy body at its best,
 How far can that project thy soul on its lone way?

Yet gifts should prove their use:
 I own the Past profuse
 Of power each side, perfection every turn:
 Eyes, ears took in their dole,
 Brain treasured up the whole;
 Should not the heart beat once "How good to live and learn"?

Not once beat "Praise be Thine!
 I see the whole design,
 I, who saw power, see now love perfect too:
 Perfect I call Thy plan:
 Thanks that I was a man!
 Maker, remake, complete,—I trust what Thou shalt do."

For pleasant is this flesh;
 Our soul, in its rose-mesh
 Pulled ever to the earth, still yearns for rest:
 Would we some prize might hold
 To match those manifold
 Possessions of the brute,—gain most, as we did best!

Let us not always say,
 "Spite of this flesh to-day
 I strove, made head, gained ground upon the whole!"
 As the bird wings and sings,
 Let us cry "All good things
 Are ours, nor soul helps flesh more, now, than flesh helps
 soul!"

Therefore I summon age
 To grant youth's heritage,
 Life's struggle having so far reached its term:
 Thence shall I pass, approved,
 A man, for aye removed
 From the developed brute; a God tho' in the germ.

And I shall thereupon
 Take rest, ere I be gone
 Once more on my adventure brave and new:
 Fearless and unperplexed,
 When I wage battle next,
 What weapons to select, what armour to indue.

Youth ended, I shall try
My gain or loss thereby;
Leave the fire ashes, what survives is gold:
And I shall weigh the same,
Give life its praise or blame:
Young, all lay in dispute; I shall know, being old.

For, note when evening shuts,
A certain moment cuts
The deed off, calls the glory from the gray:
A whisper from the west
Shoots—"Add this to the rest,
Take it and try its worth: here dies another day."

So, still within this life,
Tho' lifted o'er its strife,
Let me discern, compare, pronounce at last,
"This rage was right i' the main,
That acquiescence vain:
The Future I may face now I have proved the Past."

For more is not reserved
To man, with soul just nerved
To act to-morrow what he learns to-day:
Here, work enough to watch
The Master work, and catch
Hints of the proper craft, tricks of the tool's true play.

As it was better, youth
Should strive, thro' acts uncouth,
Toward making, than repose on aught found made:
So, better, age, exempt
From strife, should know, than tempt
Further. Thou waitedst age: wait death, nor be afraid:

Enough now, if the Right
And Good and Infinite
Be named here, as thou callest thy hand thine own,
With knowledge absolute
Subject to no dispute
From fools that crowded youth, nor let thee feel alone.

Be there, for once and all,
 Severed great minds from small,
 Announced to each his station in the Past!
 Was I, the world arraigned,
 Were they, my soul disdained,
 Right? Let age speak the truth and give us peace at last!

Now, who shall arbitrate?
 Ten men love what I hate,
 Shun what I follow, slight what I receive;
 Ten, who in ears and eyes
 Match me: we all surmise,
 They, this thing, and I, that: whom shall my soul believe?

Not on the vulgar mass
 Called "work," must sentence pass,
 Things done, that took the eye and had the price;
 O'er which, from level stand,
 The low world laid its hand,
 Found straightway to its mind, could value in a trice:

But all, the world's coarse thumb
 And finger failed to plumb,
 So passed in making up the main account:
 All instincts immature,
 All purposes unsure,
 That weighed not as his work, yet swelled the man's amount:

Thoughts hardly to be packed
 Into a narrow act,
 Fancies that broke thro' language and escaped:
 All I could never be,
 All, men ignored in me,
 This, I was worth to God, whose wheel the pitcher shaped.

Ay, note that Potter's wheel,
 That metaphor! and feel
 Why time spins fast, why passive lies our clay,—
 Thou, to whom fools propound,
 When the wine makes its round,
 "Since life fleets, all is change; the Past gone, seize to-day!"

Fool! All that is, at all,
Lasts ever, past recall;
Earth changes, but thy soul and God stand sure:
What entered into thee,
That was, is, and shall be:
Time's wheel runs back or stops: Potter and clay endure.

He fixed thee mid this dance
Of plastic circumstance,
This Present, thou forsooth, wouldst fain arrest:
Machinery just meant
To give thy soul its bent,
Try thee and turn thee forth, sufficiently impressed.

What tho' the earlier grooves
Which ran the laughing loves
Around thy base, no longer pause and press?
What tho' about thy rim,
Sculpt-things in order grim
Grow out, in graver mood, obey the sterner stress?

Look not thou down but up!
To uses of a cup
The festal board, lamp's flash and trumpet's peal,
The new wine's foaming flow,
The Master's lips a-glow!
Thou, heaven's consummate cup, what needst thou with
earth's wheel?

But I need, now as then,
Thee, God, who moulded men!
And since, not even while the whirl was worst,
Did I,—to the wheel of life
With shapes and colors rife,
Bound dizzily,—mistake my end, to slake Thy thirst:

So take and use Thy work,
Amend what flaws may lurk.
What strain o' the stuff, what warpings past the aim!
My times be in Thy hand!
Perfect the cup as planned!
Let age approve of youth, and death complete the same!

SONGS FROM PIPPA PASSES.

I.

THE year's at the spring
 And day's at the morn:
 Morning's at seven;
 The hillside's dew-pearled;
 The lark's on the wing;
 The snail's on the thorn:
 God's in His heaven—
 All's right with the world!

II.

Give her but a least excuse to love me!
 When—Where—
 How—can this arm establish her above me,
 If fortune fixed her as my lady there,
 There already, to eternally reprove me?
 (“Hist!”—said Kate the queen;
 But “Oh,” cried the maiden, binding her tresses,
 “’Tis only a page that carols unseen,
 Crumbling your hounds their messes!”)

Is she wronged?—To the rescue of her honor,
 My heart!
 Is she poor?—What costs it to be styled a doner?
 Merely an earth to cleave, a sea to part.
 But that fortune should have thrust all this upon her!
 (“Nay, list!”—bade Kate the queen;
 And still cried the maiden, binding her tresses,
 “’Tis only a page that carols unseen,
 Fitting your hawks their jesses!”)

III.

All service ranks the same with God:
 If now, as formerly He trod
 Paradise, His presence fills
 Our earth, each only as God wills
 Can work—God's puppets, best and worst,
 Are we: there is no last nor first.

SAUL.

[This is, perhaps, the grandest and most beautiful of all Browning's religious poems. It is a Messianic oratorio in words. The influence of music in the cure of diseases has long been the subject of study by physicians. Depression of mind, delirium, and insanity were anciently attributed to evil spirits which were put to flight by suitable harmonies. David was sent for to cure Saul.]

I.

SAID Abner, "At last thou art come! Ere I tell, ere thou
speak,
Kiss my cheek, wish me well!" Then I wished it, and did
kiss his cheek.
And he, "Since the King, O my friend, for thy countenance
sent,
Neither drunken nor eaten have we; nor until from his tent
Thou return with the joyful assurance the King liveth yet,
Shall our lip with the honey be bright, with the water be wet.
For out of the black mid-tent's silence, a space of three days,
Not a sound hath escaped to thy servants, of prayer nor of
praise,
To betoken that Saul and the Spirit have ended their strife,
And that, faint in his triumph, the monarch sinks back upon
life.

II.

"Yet now my heart leaps, O beloved! God's child with his
dew
On thy gracious gold hair, and those lilies still living and blue
Just broken to twine round thy harp-strings, as if no wild heat
Were now raging to torture the desert!"

III.

Then I, as was meet,
Knelt down to the God of my fathers, and rose on my feet,

And ran o'er the sand burnt to powder. The tent was un-
 looped;
 I pulled up the spear that obstructed, and under I stooped;
 Hands and knees on the slippery grass-patch, all withered and
 gone,
 That extends to the second enclosure, I groped my way on
 Till I felt where the foldskirts fly open. Then once more I
 prayed,
 And opened the foldskirts and entered; and was not afraid
 But spoke, "Here is David, thy servant!" And no voice
 replied.
 At the first I saw naught but the blackness; but soon I de-
 scribed
 A something more black than the blackness—the vast, the
 upright
 Main prop which sustains the pavilion; and slow into sight
 Grew a figure against it, gigantic and blackest of all.
 Then a sunbeam, that burst thro' the tent roof, showed Saul.

IV.

He stood erect as that tent-prop, both arms stretched out wide
 On the great cross-support in the centre, that goes to each side;
 He relaxed not a muscle, but hung there as, caught in his
 pangs
 And waiting his change, the king serpent all heavily hangs,
 Far away from his kind, in the pine, till deliverance come
 With the spring-time,—so agonized Saul, drear and stark,
 blind and dumb.

V.

Then I tuned my harp,—took off the lilies we twine round its
 chords
 Lest they snap 'neath the stress of the noontide—those sun-
 beams like swords!
 And I first played the tune all our sheep know, as, one after
 one,
 So docile they come to the pen-door till folding be done.
 They are white and untorn by the bushes, for lo, they have fed
 Where the long grasses stifle the water within the stream's
 bed;

And now one after one seeks its lodging, as star follows star
Into eve and the blue far above us,—so blue and so far!

VI.

—Then the tune, for which quails on the cornland will each
leave his mate
To fly after the player; then, what makes the crickets elate
Till for boldness they fight one another: and then, what has
weight
To set the quick jerboa a-musing outside his sandhouse—
There are none such as he for a wonder, half bird and half
mouse!
God made all the creatures and gave them our love and our
fear,
To give sign, we and they are his children, one family here.

VII.

Then I played the help-tune of our reapers, their wine-song,
when hand
Grasps at hand, eye lights eye in good friendship, and great
hearts expand
And grow one in the sense of this world's life.—And then, the
last song
When the dead man is praised on his journey—"Bear, bear
him along
With his few faults shut up like dead flowerets!" Are balm-
seeds not here
To console us? The land has none left such as he on the bier.
"Oh, would we might keep thee, my brother!"—And then, the
glad chaunt
Of the marriage,—first go the young maidens, next, she whom
we vaunt
As the beauty, the pride of our dwelling.—And then, the
great march
Wherein man runs to man to assist him and buttress an arch
Naught can break; who shall harm them, our friends?—
Then, the chorus intoned
As the Levites go up to the altar in glory enthroned.
But I stopped here: for here in the darkness Saul groaned.

VIII.

And I paused, held my breath in such silence, and listened
 apart;
 And the tent shook, for mighty Saul shuddered: and sparkles
 'gan dart
 From the jewels that woke in his turban, at once with a start
 All its lordly male-sapphires, and rubies courageous at heart.
 So the head: but the body still moved not, still hung there
 erect.
 And I bent once more to my playing, pursued it unchecked,
 As I sang,—

IX.

“Oh, our manhood's prime vigor! No spirit feels waste,
 Not a muscle is stopped in its playing nor sinew unbraced.
 Oh, the wild joys of living! The leaping from rock up to
 rock,
 The strong rending of boughs from the fig-tree, the cool silver
 shock
 Of the plunge in a pool's living water, the hunt of the bear,
 And the sultriness showing the lion is couched in his lair.
 And the meal, the rich dates yellowed over with gold-dust
 divine,
 And the locust-flesh steeped in the pitcher, the full draught
 of wine,
 And the sleep in the dried river-channel where bulrushes tell
 That the water was wont to go warbling so softly and well.
 How good is man's life, the mere living! how fit to employ
 All the heart and the soul and the senses for ever in joy!
 Hast thou loved the white locks of thy father, whose sword
 thou didst guard
 When he trusted thee forth with the armies, for glorious
 reward?
 Didst thou see the thin hands of thy mother, held up as men
 sung
 The low song of the nearly departed, and hear her faint tongue
 Joining in while it could to the witness, 'Let one more attest,
 I have lived, seen God's hand through a lifetime, and all was
 for best!
 Then they sung thro' their tears in strong triumph, not much,
 but the rest.

And thy brothers, the help and the contest, the working
 whence grew
 Such result as, from seething grape-bundles, the spirit
 strained true:
 And the friends of thy boyhood—that boyhood of wonder and
 hope,
 Present promise and wealth of the future beyond the eye's
 scope,—
 Till lo, thou art grown to a monarch; a people is thine:
 And all gifts which the world offers singly, on one head com-
 bine!
 On one head, all the beauty and strength, love and rage (like
 the throe
 That, a-work in the rock, helps its labor and lets the gold go),
 High ambition and deeds which surpass it, fame crowning
 them,—all
 Brought to blaze on the head of one creature—King Saul!"

X.

And lo, with that leap of my spirit,—heart, hand, harp, and
 voice,
 Each lifting Saul's name out of sorrow, each bidding rejoice
 Saul's fame in the light it was made for—as when, dare I say,
 The Lord's army, in rapture of service, strains thro' its array,
 And upsoareth the cherubim-chariot—"Saul!" cried I, and
 stopped,
 And waited the thing that should follow. Then Saul, who
 hung propped
 By the tent's cross-support in the centre, was struck by his
 name.
 Have ye seen when Spring's arrowy summons goes right to
 the aim,
 And some mountain, the last to withstand her, that held (he
 alone,
 While the vale laughed in freedom and flowers) on a broad
 bust of stone
 A year's snow bound about for a breastplate,—leaves grasp
 of the sheet?
 Fold on fold all at once it crowds thunderously down to his
 feet,

And there fronts you, stark, black, but alive yet, your mountain of old,
With his rents, the successive bequeathings of ages untold:
Yea, each harm got in fighting your battles, each furrow and scar
Of his head thrust 'twixt you and the tempest—all hail, there they are!
—Now again to be softened with verdure, again hold the nest
Of the dove, tempt the goat and its young to the green on his crest
For their food in the ardors of summer. One long shudder thrilled
All the tent till the very air tingled, then sank and was stilled
At the King's self left standing before me, released and aware.
What was gone, what remained? All to traverse 'twixt hope and despair.
Death was past, life not come: so he waited. Awhile his right hand
Held the brow, helped the eyes left too vacant, forthwith to remand
To their place what new objects should enter; 'twas Saul as before.
I looked up, and dared gaze at those eyes, nor was hurt any more
Than by slow pallid sunsets in autumn, ye watch from the shore.
At their sad level gaze o'er the ocean—a sun's slow decline
Over hills which, resolved in stern silence, o'erlap and entwine
Base with base to knit strength more intensely: so, arm folded arm
O'er the chest whose slow heavings subsided.

XI.

What spell or what charm.
(For, awhile there was trouble within me) what next should I urge
To sustain him where song had restored him? Song filled to the verge

His cup with the wine of this life, pressing all that it yields
Of mere fruitage, the strength and the beauty: beyond, on
what fields

Glean a vintage more potent and perfect to brighten the eye,
And bring blood to the lip, and commend them the cup they
put by?

He saith, "It is good;" still he drinks not: he lets me praise
life,

Gives assent, yet would die for his own part.

XII.

Then fancies grew rife
Which had come long ago on the pasture, when round me the
sheep

Fed in silence—above, the one eagle wheeled slow as in sleep;
And I lay in my hollow and mused on the world that might
lie

'Neath his ken, tho' I saw but the strip 'twixt the hill and
the sky:

And I laughed—"Since my days are ordained to be passed
with my flocks,

Let me people at least, with my fancies, the plains and the
rocks,

Dream the life I am never to mix with, and image the show
Of mankind as they live in those fashions I hardly shall
know!

Schemes of life, its best rules and right uses, the courage that
gains,

And the prudence that keeps what men strive for!" And
now these old trains

Of vague thought came again; I grew surer; so, once more the
string

Of my harp made response to my spirit, as thus—

XIII.

"Yea, my King,"
I began—"thou dost well in rejecting mere comforts that
spring

From the mere mortal life, held in common by man and by
brute:
In our flesh grows the branch of this life, in our soul it bears
fruit.
Thou hast marked the slow rise of the tree,—how its stem
trembled first
Till it passed the kid's lip, the stag's antler; then safely
outburst
The fan-branches all round; and thou mindest when these
too, in turn
Broke a-bloom and the palm-tree seemed perfect: yet more
was to learn,
Even the good that comes in with the palm-fruit. Our dates
shall we slight,
When their juice brings a cure for all sorrow? or care for the
plight
Of the palm's self whose slow growth produced them? Not
so! stem and branch
Shall decay, nor be known in their place, while the palm-wine
shall staunch
Every wound of man's spirit in winter. I pour thee such
wine.
Leave the flesh to the fate it was fit for! the spirit be thine!
By the spirit, when age shall o'ercome thee, thou still shalt
enjoy
More indeed, than at first when, unconscious, the life of a boy.
Crush that life, and behold its wine running! Each deed
thou hast done
Dies, revives, goes to work in the world; until e'en as the sun
Looking down on the earth, tho' clouds spoil him, tho' tem-
pests efface,
Can find nothing his own deed produced not, must everywhere
trace
The results of his past summer-prime,—so, each ray of thy
will,
Every flash of thy passion and prowess, long over, shall thrill
Thy whole people, the countless, with ardour, till they too give
forth
A like cheer to their sons: who, in turn, fill the South and the
North

With the radiance thy deed was the germ of. Carouse in the
past!

But the license of age has its limit; thou diest at last.
As the lion when age dims his eyeball, the rose at her height,
So with man—so his power and his beauty forever take flight.
No! Again a long draught of my soul-wine! Look forth
o'er the years!

Thou hast done now with eyes for the actual; begin with the
seer's!

Is Saul dead? In the depth of the vale make his tomb—bid
arise

A gray mountain of marble heaped four-square, till, built to
the skies,

Let it mark where the great First King slumbers: whose fame
would ye know?

Up above see the rock's naked face, where the record shall go
In great characters cut by the scribe,—Such was Saul, so he
did;

With the sages directing the work, by the populace chid,—
For not half, they'll affirm, is comprised there! Which fault
to amend,

In the grove with his kind grows the cedar, whereon they
shall spend

(See, in tablets 'tis level before them) their praise, and record
With the gold of the graver, Saul's story,—the statesman's
great word

Side by side with the poet's sweet comment. The river's
a-wave

With smooth paper-reeds grazing each other when prophet-
winds rave:

So the pen gives unborn generations their due and their part
In thy being! Then, first of the mighty, thank God that thou
art!"

XIV.

And behold while I sang . . . but O Thou who didst grant
me that day,

And before it not seldom has granted Thy help to essay,

Carry on and complete an adventure,—my shield and my
 sword
 In that act where my soul was Thy servant, Thy word was
 my word,—
 Still be with me, who then at the summit of human endeavor
 And scaling the highest, man's thought could, gazed hope-
 less as ever
 On the new stretch of heaven above me—till, mighty to save,
 Just one lift of Thy hand cleared that distance—God's throne
 from man's grave!
 Let me tell out my tale to its ending—my voice to my heart
 Which can scarce dare believe in what marvels last night I
 took part,
 As this morning I gather the fragments, alone with my sheep,
 And still fear lest the terrible glory evanish like sleep!
 For I wake in the gray dewy covert, while Hebron upheaves
 The dawn struggling with night on his shoulder, and Kidron
 retrieves
 Slow the damage of yesterday's sunshine.

XV.

I say then,—my song
 While I sang thus, assuring the monarch, and, ever more
 strong,
 Made a proffer of good to console him—he slowly resumed
 His old motions and habitudes kingly. The right hand re-
 plumed
 His black locks to their wonted composure, adjusted the
 swathes
 Of his turban, and see—the huge sweat that his countenance
 bathes.
 He wipes off with the robe; and he girds now his loins as of
 yore,
 And feels slow for the armlets of price, with the clasp set
 before.
 He is Saul, ye remember in glory,—ere error had bent
 The broad brow from the daily communion; and still, tho'
 much spent

Be the life and bearing that front you, the same, God did
 choose,
 To receive what a man may waste, desecrate, never quite lose.
 So sank he along by the tent-prop, till, stayed by the pile
 Of his armor and war-cloak and garments, he leaned there
 awhile,
 And sat out my singing,—one arm round the tent-prop, to
 raise
 His bent head, and the other hung slack—till I touched on
 the praise
 I foresaw from all men in all time, to the man patient there;
 And thus ended, the harp falling forward. Then first I
 was 'ware
 That he sat, as I say, with my head just above his vast knees
 Which were thrust out each side around me, like oak roots
 which please
 To encircle a lamb when it slumbers. I looked up to know
 If the best I could do had brought solace; he spoke not, but
 slow
 Lifted up the hand slack at his side, till he laid it with care
 Soft and grave, but in mild settled will, on my brow: thro' my
 hair
 The large fingers were pushed, and he bent back my head,
 with kind power—
 All my face back, intent to peruse it, as men do a flower.
 Thus held he me there with his great eyes that scrutinized
 mine—
 And oh, all my heart how it loved him! but where was the
 sign?
 I yearned—"Could I help thee, my father, inventing a bliss,
 I would add, to that life of the past, both the future and this;
 I would give thee new life altogether, as good, ages hence,
 As this moment,—had love but the warrant, love's heart to
 dispense!"

XVI.

Then the truth came upon me. No harp more—no song more!
 outbroke—

XVII.

"I have gone the whole round of creation: I saw and I spoke;
I, a work of God's hand for that purpose, received in my
brain

And pronounced on the rest of his handwork—returned him
again

His creation's approval or censure: I spoke as I saw,
Reported, as man may of God's work—all's love, yet all's law.
Now I lay down the judgeship he lent me. Each faculty
tasked

To perceive him has gained an abyss, where a dewdrop was
asked.

Have I knowledge? confounded it shrivels at Wisdom laid
bare.

Have I forethought? how purblind, how blank, to the Infinite
Care!

Do I task any faculty highest, to image success?

I but open my eyes,—and perfection, no more and no less,
In the kind I imagined, full-fronts me, and God is seen God
In the star, in the stone, in the flesh, in the soul and the clod.
And thus looking within and around me, I ever renew
(With that stoop of the soul which in bending upraises it too)
The submission of man's nothing-perfect to God's all com-
plete.

As by each new obeisance in spirit, I climb to His feet.

Yet with all this abounding experience, this deity known,
I shall dare to discover some province, some gift of my own.
There's a faculty pleasant to exercise, hard to hoodwink,
I am fain to keep still in abeyance (I laugh as I think),
Lest, insisting to claim and parade in it, wot ye, I worst
E'en the Giver in one gift.—Behold, I could love if I durst!
But, I sink the pretension as fearing a man may o'ertake
God's own speed in the one way of love; I abstain for love's
sake.

—What, my soul? see thus far and no farther? when doors
great and small,

Nine-and-ninety flew ope at our touch, should the hundredth
appall?

In the least things have faith, yet distrust in the greatest of
all?

Do I find love so full in my nature, God's ultimate gift,
That I doubt His own love can compete with it?

Here, the parts shift?

Here, the creature surpass the creator,—the end, what began?
Would I fain in my impotent yearning do all for this man,
And dare doubt He alone shall not help him, who yet alone
can?

Would it ever have entered my mind, the bare will, much less
power,

To bestow on this Saul what I sang of, the marvellous dower
Of the life he was gifted and filled with? to make such a soul,
Such a body, and then such an earth for insphering the whole?
And doth it not enter my mind (as my warm tears attest),
These good things being given, to go on, and give one more,
the best?

Ay, to save and redeem and restore him, maintain at the
height

This perfection,—succeed with life's dayspring, death's
minute of night?

Interpose at the difficult minute, snatch Saul the mistake,
Saul the failure, the ruin he seems now,—and bid him awake
From the dream, the probation, the prelude, to find himself
set

Clear and safe in new light and new life,—a new harmony yet
To be run and continued, and ended—who knows?—or
endure!

The man taught enough by life's dream, of the rest to make
sure;

By the pain-throb, triumphantly winning intensified bliss,
And the next world's reward and repose, by the struggles in
this.

XVIII.

"I believe it! 'Tis Thou, God, that givest, 'tis I who receive:
In the first is the last, in Thy will is my power to believe.
All's one gift: Thou canst grant it, moreover, as prompt to my
prayer,

As I breathe out this breath, as I open these arms to the air.
From Thy will stream the worlds, life and nature, Thy dread
Sabaoth:

I will?—the mere atoms despise me! Why am I not loath

To look that, even that in the face too? Why is it I dare
Think but lightly of such impuissance? What stops my
despair?

This;—'tis not man Does which exalts him, but what
man Would do!

See the King—I would help him, but cannot, the wishes fall
through.

Could I wrestle to raise him from sorrow, grow poor to enrich,
To fill up his life, starve my own out, I would—knowing
which,

I know that my service is perfect. Oh, speak thro' me now!
Would I suffer for him that I love? So wouldst Thou—so
wilt Thou!

So shall crown Thee the topmost, ineffablest, uttermost
crown—

And Thy love fill infinitude wholly, nor leave up nor down
One spot for the creature to stand in! It is by no breath,
Turn of eye, wave of hand, that salvation joins issue with
death!

As Thy love is discovered almighty, almighty be proved
Thy power, that exists with and for it, of being Beloved!
He who did most, shall bear most; the strongest shall stand
the most weak.

'Tis the weakness in strength, that I cry for! my flesh, that I
seek

In the Godhead! I seek and I find it. O Saul, it shall be
A Face like my face that receives thee; a Man like to me,
Thou shalt love and be loved by, forever: a Hand like this
hand

Shall throw open the gates of new life to thee! See the
Christ stand!"

XIX.

I know not too well how I found my way home in the night.
There were witnesses, cohorts about me, to left and to right,
Angels, powers, the unuttered, unseen, the alive, the aware:
I repressed, I got thro' them as hardly, as strugglingly there,
As a runner beset by the populace famished for news—
Life or death. The whole earth was awakened, hell loosed
with her crews;

And the stars of night beat with emotion, and tingled and shot
 Out in fire the strong pain of pent knowledge: but I fainted
 not
 For the Hand still impelled me at once and supported, sup-
 pressed
 All the tumult, and quenched it with quiet, and holy behest,
 Till the rapture was shut in itself, and the earth sank to
 rest.
 Anon at the dawn, all that trouble had withered from earth—
 Not so much, but I saw it die out in the day's tender birth;
 In the gathered intensity brought to the gray of the hills;
 In the shuddering forests' held breath; in the sudden wind-
 thrills;
 In the startled wild beasts that bore off, each with eye sidling
 still
 Though averted with wonder and dread; in the birds stiff and
 chill
 That rose heavily, as I approached them, made stupid with
 awe:
 E'en the serpent that slid away silent—he felt the new law.
 The same stared in the white humid faces upturned by the
 flowers;
 The same worked in the heart of the cedar and moved the
 vine-bowers;
 And the little brooks witnessing murmured, persistent and
 low,
 With their obstinate, all but hushed voices—"E'en so, it is so!"

JAMES LEE'S WIFE.

AMONG THE ROCKS.

I.

OH, good gigantic smile o' the brown old earth,
 This autumn morning! How he sets his bones
 To bask i' the sun, and thrusts out knees and feet
 For the ripple to run over in its mirth;

 Listening the while, where on the heap of stones
 The white breast of the sea-lark twitters sweet.

II.

That is the doctrine, simple, ancient, true ;
 Such is life's trial, as old earth smiles and knows.
 If you loved only what were worth your love,
 Love were clear gain, and wholly well for you :
 Make the low nature better by your throes !
 Give earth yourself, go up for gain above !

MY LAST DUCHESS.

FERRARA.

THAT'S my last Duchess painted on the wall,
 Looking as if she were alive. I call
 That a piece of wonder, now : Frà Pandolf's hands
 Worked busily a day, and there she stands.
 Will 't please you sit and look at her ? I said
 "Frà Pandolf" by design : for never read
 Strangers like you that pictured countenance,
 The depth and passion of its earnest glance,
 But to myself they turned (since none puts by
 The curtain I have drawn for you, but I)
 And seemed as they would ask me, if they durst,
 How such a glance came there ; so, not the first
 Are you to turn and ask thus. Sir, 'twas not
 Her husband's presence only, called that spot
 Of joy into the Duchess' cheek : perhaps
 Frà Pandolf chanced to say "Her mantle laps
 Over my lady's wrist too much," or "Paint
 Must never hope to reproduce the faint
 Half-flush that dies along her throat : " such stuff
 Was courtesy, she thought, and cause enough
 For calling up that spot of joy. She had
 A heart—how shall I say?—too soon made glad,
 Too easily impressed ; she liked whate'er
 She looked on, and her looks went everywhere.
 Sir, 'twas all one ! My favor at her breast,
 The dropping of the daylight in the West,

The bough of cherries some officious fool
 Broke in the orchard for her, the white mule
 She rode with round the terrace—all and each
 Would draw from her alike the approving speech,
 Or blush, at least. She thanked men,—good! but thanked
 Somehow—I know not how—as she ranked
 My gift of a nine-hundred-years-old name
 With anybody's gift. Who'd stoop to blame
 This sort of trifling? Even had you skill
 In speech—(which I have not)—to make your will
 Quite clear to such an one, and say, "Just this
 Or that in you disgusts me; here you miss,
 Or there exceed the mark"—and if she let
 Herself be lessoned so, nor plainly set
 Her wits to yours, forsooth, and made excuse,
 —E'en then would be some stooping; and I choose
 Never to stoop. Oh sir, she smiled, no doubt,
 Whene'er I passed her; but who passed without
 Much the same smile? This grew; I gave commands;
 Then all smiles stopped together. There she stands
 As if alive. Will 't please you rise? We'll meet
 The company below, then. I repeat,
 The Count your master's known munificence
 Is ample warrant that no just pretence
 Of mine for dowry will be disallowed;
 Though his fair daughter's self, as I avowed
 At starting, is my object. Nay, we'll go
 Together down, sir. Notice Neptune, though,
 Taming a sea-horse, thought a rarity,
 Which Claus of Innsbruck cast in bronze for me!

THE LAST RIDE TOGETHER.

I.

I SAID—Then, dearest, since 'tis so,
 Since now at length my fate I know,
 Since nothing all my love avails,
 Since all, my life seems meant for, fails,
 Since this was written and needs must be—

My whole heart rises up to bless
Your name in pride and thankfulness!
Take back the hope you gave,—I claim
Only a memory of the same,
—And this beside, if you will not blame,
Your leave for one more last ride with me.

II.

My mistress bent that brow of hers;
Those deep dark eyes where pride demurs
When pity would be softening through,
Fixed me a breathing-while or two.
With life or death in the balance: right!
The blood replenished me again;
My last thought was at least not vain:
I and my mistress, side by side
Shall be together, breathe and ride,
So, one day more am I deified.

Who knows but the world may end to-night?

III.

Hush! if you saw some western cloud
All billowy-blossomed, over-bowed
By many benedictions—sun's
And moon's and evening star's at once—

And so, you, looking and loving best,
Conscious grew, your passion drew
Cloud, sunset, moonrise, star-shine too,
Down on you, near and yet more near,
Till flesh must fade for heaven was here—
Thus leant she and lingered—joy and fear!

Thus lay she a moment on my breast.

IV.

Then we began to ride. My soul
Smoothed itself out, a long-cramped scroll
Freshening and fluttering in the wind.
Past hopes already lay behind.

What need to strive with a life awry?

Had I said that, had I done this,
 So might I gain, so might I miss.
 Might she have loved me? just as well
 She might have hated, who can tell!
 Where had I been now if the worst befell?
 And here we are riding, she and I,

V.

Fail I alone, in words and deeds?
 Why, all men strive and who succeeds?
 We rode; it seemed my sprit flew,
 Saw other regions, cities new,
 As the world rushed by on either side.
 I thought,—All labor, yet no less
 Bear up beneath their unsuccess.
 Look at the end of work, contrast
 The petty done, the undone vast,
 This present of theirs with the hopeful past!
 I hoped she would love me; here we ride.

VI.

What hand and brain went ever paired?
 What heart alike conceived and dared?
 What act proved all its thought had been?
 What will but felt the fleshly screen?
 We ride and I see her bosom heave.
 There's many a crown for who can reach.
 Ten lines, a statesman's life in each!
 The flag stuck on a heap of bones,
 A soldier's doing! what atones?
 They scratch his name on the Abbey-stones.
 My riding is better, by their leave.

VII.

What does it all mean, poet? Well,
 Your brains beat into rhythm, you tell
 What we felt only; you expressed
 You hold things beautiful the best,
 And pace them in rhyme so, side by side.

'Tis something, nay 'tis much: but then,
 Have you yourself what's best for men?
 Are you—poor, sick, old ere your time—
 Nearer one whit your own sublime
 Than we who have never turned a rhyme?
 Sing, riding's a joy! For me, I ride.

VIII.

And you, great sculptor—so, you gave
 A score of years to Art, her slave
 And that's your Venus, whence we turn
 To yonder girl that fords the burn!
 You acquiesce, and shall I repine?
 What, man of music, you grown gray
 With notes and nothing else to say,
 Is this your sole praise from a friend,
 "Greatly his opera's strains intend,
 But in music we know how fashions end!"
 I gave my youth; but we ride, in fine.

IX.

Who knows what's fit for us? Had fate
 Proposed bliss here should sublimate
 My being—had I signed the bond—
 Still one must lead some life beyond,
 Have a bliss to die with, dim-described.
 This foot once planted on the goal,
 This glory-garland round my soul,
 Could I desery such? Try and test!
 I sink back shuddering from my quest.
 Earth being so good, would heaven seem best?
 Now, heaven and she are beyond this ride.

X.

And yet—she has not spoke so long!
 What if heaven be that, fair and strong
 At life's best, with our eyes upturned
 Whither life's flower is first discerned,
 We, fixed so, ever should so abide?

What if we still ride on, we two,
 With life forever old yet new,
 Changed not in kind but in degree,
 The instant made eternity,—
 And heaven just prove that I and she
 Ride, ride together, forever ride?

THROUGH THE METIDJA TO ABD-EL-KADR.

As I ride, as I ride,
 With a full heart for my guide,
 So its tide rocks my side,
 As I ride, as I ride,
 That, as I were double-eyed,
 He, in whom our Tribes confide,
 Is descried, ways untried,
 As I ride, as I ride.

As I ride, as I ride
 To our Chief and his Allied,
 Who dares chide my heart's pride
 As I ride, as I ride?
 Or are witnesses denied—
 Through the desert waste and wide
 Do I glide unespied
 As I ride, as I ride?

As I ride, as I ride,
 When an inner voice has cried,
 The sands slide, nor abide
 (As I ride, as I ride)
 O'er each visioned homicide
 That came vaunting (has he lied?)
 To reside—where he died,
 As I ride, as I ride.

As I ride, as I ride,
 Ne'er has spur my swift horse plied,
 Yet his hide, streaked and pied,
 As I ride, as I ride,

Shows where sweat has sprung and dried,
 —Zebra-footed, ostrich-thighed—
 How has vied stride with stride
 As I ride, as I ride!

As I ride, as I ride,
 Could I loose what Fate has tied,
 Ere I pried, she should hide
 (As I ride, as I ride)
 All that's meant me—satisfied
 When the Prophet and the Bride
 Stop veins I'd have subside
 As I ride, as I ride!

A GRAMMARIAN'S FUNERAL.

SHORTLY AFTER THE REVIVAL OF LEARNING IN EUROPE.

LET us begin and carry up this corpse,
 Singing together.
 Leave me the common crofts, the vulgar thorpes,
 Each in its tether
 Sleeping safe on the bosom of the plain,
 Cared-for till cock-crow:
 Look out if yonder be not day again
 Rimming the rock-row!
 That's the appropriate country; there, man's thought,
 Rarer, intenser,
 Self-gathered for an outbreak, as it ought,
 Chafes in the censer.
 Leave we the unlettered plain its herd and crop;
 Seek we sepulture
 On a tall mountain, citied to the top,
 Crowded with culture!
 All the peaks soar, but one the rest excels;
 Clouds overcome it;
 No! yonder sparkle is the citadel's
 Circling its summit.

Thither our path lies; wind we up the heights:
 Wait ye the warning?
 Our low life was the level's and the night's:
 He's for the morning.
 Step to a tune, square chests, erect each head,
 'Ware the beholders!
 This is our master, famous, calm, and dead,
 Borne on our shoulders.

Sleep, crop and herd! sleep, darkling thorpe and croft.
 Safe from the weather!
 He, whom we convoy to his grave aloft,
 Singing together,
 He was a man born with thy face and throat,
 Lyric Apollo!
 Long he lived nameless: how should spring take note
 Winter would follow?
 Till lo, the little touch, and youth was gone!
 Cramped and diminished,
 Moaned he, "New measures, other feet anon!
 My dance is finished?"
 No, that's the world's way; (keep the mountain-side
 Make for the city!)
 He knew the signal, and stepped on with pride
 Over men's pity;
 Left play for work, and grappled with the world
 Bent on escaping;
 "What's in the scroll," quoth he, "thou keepest furled?
 Show me their shaping,
 Theirs who most studied man, the bard and sage,—
 Give!"—So, he gowned him,
 Straight got by heart that book to its last page:
 Learned, we found him.
 Yea, but we found him bald too, eyes like lead,
 Accents uncertain:
 "Time to taste life," another would have said,
 "Up with the curtain!"
 This man said rather, "Actual life comes next?
 Patience a moment!

Grant I have mastered learning's crabbed text,
 Still there's the comment.
 Let me know all! Prate not of most or least,
 Painful or easy!
 Even to the crumbs I'd fain eat up the feast,
 Ay, nor feel queasy."
 Oh, such a life as he resolved to live,
 When he had learned it,
 When he had gathered all books had to give!
 Sooner, he spurned it.
 Image the whole, then execute the parts—
 Fancy the fabric
 Quite, ere you build, ere steel strikes fire from quartz,
 Ere mortar dab brick!

(Here's the town-gate reached; there's the market-place
 Gaping before us.)
 Yea, this in him was the peculiar grace
 (Hearten our chorus!)
 That before living he'd learn how to live—
 No end to learning:
 Earn the means first—God surely will contrive
 Use for our earning.
 Others mistrust and say, "But time escapes!
 Live now or never!"
 He said, "What's time? Leave Now for dogs and apes!
 Man has forever."
 Back to his book then: deeper drooped his head:
Calculus racked him:
 Leaden before, his eyes grew dross of lead:
Tussis attacked him.
 "Now, master, take a little rest!"—not he!
 (Caution redoubled!)
 Step two abreast, the way winds narrowly!)
 Not a whit troubled.
 Back to his studies, fresher than at first,
 Fierce as a dragon
 He (soul-hydroptic with a sacred thirst)
 Sucked at the flagon.

Oh, if we draw a circle premature,
 Heedless of fair gain,
 Greedy for quick returns of profit, sure
 Bad is our bargain!
 Was it not great? did not he throw on God
 (He loves the burthen)—
 God's task to make the heavenly period
 Perfect the earthen?
 Did not he magnify the mind, show clear
 Just what it all meant?
 He would not discount life, as fools do here,
 Paid by instalment,
 He ventured neck or nothing—heaven's success
 Found, or earth's failure:
 "Wilt thou trust death or not?" He answered "Yes!
 Hence with life's pale lure!"
 That low man seeks a little thing to do,
 Sees it and does it:
 This high man, with a great thing to pursue,
 Dies ere he knows it.
 That low man goes on adding one to one,
 His hundred's soon hit:
 This high man, aiming at a million,
 Misses an unit.
 That, has the world here—should he need the next,
 Let the world mind him!
 This, throws himself on God, and unperplexed
 Seeking shall find Him.
 So, with the throttling hands of death at strife,
 Ground he at grammar;
 Still, thro' the rattle, parts of speech were rife:
 While he could stammer
 He settled *Hoti's* business—let it be!—
 Properly based *Oun*—
 Gave us the doctrine of the enclitic *De*,
 Dead from the waist down.
 Well, here's the platform, here's the proper place:
 Hail to your purlieus,
 All ye high fliers of the feathered race,
 Swallows and curlews:

Here's the top-peak; the multitude below
 Live, for they can, there:
This man decided not to Live, but Know—
 Bury this man there?
Here—here's his place, where meteors shoot, clouds form,
 Lightnings are loosened,
Stars come and go! Let joy break with the storm,
 Peace let the dew send!
Lofty designs must close in like effects:
 Loftily lying,
Leave him—still loftier than the world suspects,
 Living and dying.

POEMS BY ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH.

[ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING was born at Coxhoe Hall, Durham, England, March 6, 1806. Her father was Edward Moulton; he changed his name to Barrett soon after the birth of Elizabeth, who was his eldest daughter. For many years she was in very delicate health. In 1846, she married Robert Browning. Their married life was ideal, and they remained lovers to the end. She died at Florence, June 30, 1861.

Mrs. Browning's reputation as a poet of high rank was established long before her husband received much appreciation. Her poetry is full of sympathy, of tender sentiment, and religious trust; the poems are of the kind that sink into the heart of those who love a poem without knowing why. "The Cry of the Children" is one of these. It was written about the children who were toiling in mills and mines. The following lines furnish one of the best examples of the strength of her work:

"But the child's sob in the silence curses deeper
Than the strong man in his wrath."

Other poems which are well known and among her best are "Prometheus Bound," "The Seraphim," "Casa Guidi Windows." "The Sonnets from the Portuguese" tell most delicately her love for her husband. "Aurora Leigh," her most conspicuous work, is a sociological novel in verse. A great favorite is "The Rhyme of the Duchess May." The closing lines are the expression of her strong religious faith:

"And I smiled to think God's greatness flowed around our
incompleteness,—
Round our restlessness, his rest."]

THE DEAD PAN.

I.

GODS of Hellas, gods of Hellas,
Can ye listen in your silence?
Can your mystic voices tell us
Where ye hide? In floating islands,
With a wind that evermore
Keeps you out of sight of shore?
Pan, Pan, is dead.

II.

In what revels are ye sunken,
In old Ethiopia?
Have the pygmies made you drunken,
Bathing in mandragora
Your divine pale lips, that shiver
Like the lotus in the river?
Pan, Pan, is dead.

III.

Do ye sit there still in slumber,
In gigantic Alpine rows?
The black poppies out of number,
Nodding, dripping from your brows
To the red lees of your wine,
And so kept alive and fine?
Pan, Pan, is dead.

IV.

Or lie crushed your stagnant corpses
Where the silver spheres roll on,
Stung to life by centric forces
Thrown like rays out from the sun?
While the smoke of your old altars
Is the shroud that round you welters?
Great Pan is dead.

V.

“Gods of Hellas, gods of Hellas,”
 Said the old Hellenic tongue,
 Said the hero-oaths, as well as
 Poet’s songs the sweetest sung,
 Have ye grown deaf in a day?
 Can ye speak not yea or nay,
 Since Pan is dead?

VI.

Do ye leave your rivers flowing
 All alone, O Naiades,
 While your drenchèd locks dry slow in
 This cold, feeble sun and breeze?
 Not a word the Naiads say,
 Though the rivers run for aye;
 For Pan is dead.

VII.

From the gloaming of the oak-wood,
 O ye Dryads, could ye flee?
 At the rushing thunderstroke would
 No sob tremble through the tree?
 Not a word the Dryads say,
 Though the forests wave for aye;
 For Pan is dead.

VIII.

Have ye left the mountain-places,
 Oreads wild, for other tryst?
 Shall we see no sudden faces
 Strike a glory through the mist?
 Not a sound the silence thrills
 Of the everlasting hills:
 Pan, Pan, is dead.

IX.

O twelve gods of Plato’s vision,
 Crowned to starry wanderings,
 With your chariots in procession,
 And your silver clash of wings!

Very pale ye seem to rise,
 Ghosts of Grecian deities,
 Now Pan is dead.

X.

Jove, that right hand is unloaded,
 Whence the thunder did prevail,
 While in idiocy of godhead
 Thou art staring the stars pale!
 And thine eagle, blind and old,
 Roughs his feathers in the cold,
 Pan, Pan, is dead.

XI.

Where, O Juno, is the glory
 Of thy regal look and tread?
 Will they lay forevermore thee
 On thy dim, straight golden bed?
 Will thy queendom all lie hid
 Meekly under either lid?
 Pan, Pan, is dead.

XII.

Ha, Apollo! floats his golden
 Hair all mist-like where he stands,
 While the Muses hang infolding
 Knee and foot with faint, wild hands?
 'Neath the clanging of thy bow,
 Niobe looked lost as thou!
 Pan, Pan, is dead.

XIII.

Shall the cask with its brown iron,
 Pallas' broad blue eyes eclipse,
 And no hero take inspiring
 From the god-Greek of her lips?
 'Neath her olive dost thou sit,
 Mars the mighty, cursing it?
 Pan, Pan, is dead.

XIV.

Bacchus, Bacchus! on the panther
He swoons, bound with his own vines;
And his Mænads slowly saunter,
Head aside, among the pines,
While they murmur dreamily,
“Evohe—ah—evohe—!

Ah, Pan is dead!”

XV.

Neptune lies beside the trident,
Dull and senseless as a stone;
And old Pluto, deaf and silent,
Is cast out into the sun;
Ceres smileth stern thereat,
“We *all* now are desolate,

Now Pan is dead.”

XVI.

Aphrodite! dead and driven
As thy native foam, thou art;
With the cestus long done heaving
On the white calm of thy heart.
Ai Adonis! at that shriek
Not a tear runs down her cheek.

Pan, Pan, is dead.

XVII.

And the Loves, we used to know from
One another, huddled lie,
Frore as taken in a snow-storm,
Close beside her tenderly,
As if each had weakly tried
Once to kiss her as he died.

Pan, Pan, is dead.

XVIII.

What, and Hermes? Time inthralleth
All thy cunning, Hermes, thus,
And the ivy blindly crawleth
Round thy brave caduceus?

Hast thou no new message for us,
 Full of thunder and Jove-glories?
 Nay, Pan is dead.

XIX.

Crownèd Cybele's great turret
 Rocks and crumbles on her head,
 Roar the lions of her chariot
 Toward the wilderness, unfed:
 Scornful children are not mute,—
 "Mother, mother, walk afoot,
 Since Pan is dead!"

XX.

In the fiery-hearted centre
 Of the solemn universe,
 Ancient Vesta, who could enter
 To consume thee with this curse?
 Drop thy gray chin on thy knee,
 O thou palsied Mystery!
 For Pan is dead.

XXI.

Gods, we vainly do adjure you;
 Ye return nor voice nor sign!
 Not a votary could secure you
 Even a grave for your Divine,—
 Not a grave, to show thereby,
Here these gray old gods do lie.
 Pan, Pan, is dead.

XXII.

Even that Greece who took your wages
 Calls the obolus outworn;
 And the hoarse deep-throated ages
 Laugh your godships unto scorn;
 And the poets do disclaim you,
 Or grow colder if they name you—
 And Pan is dead.

XXIII.

Gods bereavèd, gods belated,
 With your purples rent asunder,
 Gods discrowned and desecrated,
 Disinherited of thunder,
 Now the goats may climb and crop
 The soft grass on Ida's top,—
 Now Pan is dead.

XXIV.

Calm, of old, the bark went onward,
 When a cry more loud than wind,
 Rose up, deepened, and swept sunward,
 From the pilèd Dark behind;
 And the sun shrank, and grew pale,
 Breathed against by the great wail—
 “Pan, Pan, is dead.”

XXV.

And the rowers from the benches
 Fell, each shuddering on his face,
 While departing Influences
 Struck a cold back through the place;
 And the shadow of the ship
 Reeled along the passive deep—
 “Pan, Pan, is dead.”

XXVI.

And that dismal cry rose slowly
 And sank slowly through the air,
 Full of spirit's melancholy
 And eternity's despair!
 And they heard the words it said—
 PAN IS DEAD—GREAT PAN IS DEAD—
 PAN, PAN, IS DEAD.

XXVII.

'Twas the hour when One in Sion
 Hung for love's sake on a cross;
 When his brow was chill with dying,
 And his soul was faint with loss;

When his priestly blood dropped downward,
 And his kingly eyes looked throneward—
 Then Pan was dead.

XXVIII.

By the love he stood alone in,
 His sole Godhead rose complete,
 And the false gods fell down moaning,
 Each from off his golden seat;
 All the false gods with a cry
 Rendered up their deity—
 Pan, Pan, was dead.

XXIX.

Wailing wide across the islands,
 They rent, vest-like, their Divine;
 And a darkness and a silence
 Quenched the light of every shrine;
 And Dodona's oak swang lonely,
 Henceforth, to the tempest only.
 Pan, Pan, was dead.

XXX.

Pythia staggered, feeling o'er her
 Her lost god's forsaking look;
 Straight her eyeballs filmed with horror,
 And her crispy fillets shook,
 And her lips gasped through their foam,
 For a word that did not come.
 Pan, Pan, was dead.

XXXI.

O ye vain, false gods of Hellas,
 Ye are silent evermore;
 And I dash down this old chalice
 Whence libations ran of yore.
 See, the wine crawls in the dust
 Wormlike—as your glories must,
 Since Pan is dead.

XXXII.

Get to dust as common mortals,
 By a common doom and track!
 Let no Schiller from the portals
 Of that Hades call you back,
 Or instruct us to weep all
 At your antique funeral.

Pan, Pan, is dead.

XXXIII.

By your beauty, which confesses
 Some chief beauty conquering you;
 By our grand heroic guesses
 Through your falsehood at the true,—
 We will weep *not!* earth shall roll
 Heir to each god's aureole—

And Pan is dead.

XXXIV.

Earth outgrows the mythic fancies
 Sung beside her in her youth,
 And those debonair romances
 Sound but dull beside the truth.
 Phœbus' chariot-course is run:
 Look up, poets, to the sun!

Pan, Pan, is dead.

XXXV.

Christ hath sent us down the angels,
 And the whole earth and the skies
 Are illumed by altar-candles
 Lit for blessèd mysteries;
 And a priest's hand through creation
 Waveth calm and consecration—

And Pan is dead.

XXXVI.

Truth is fair: should we forego it?
 Can we sigh right for a wrong?
 God himself is the best Poet,
 And the real is his best song.

Sing his truth out fair and full,
 And secure his beautiful:
 Let Pan be dead.

XXXVII.

Truth is large; our aspiration
 Scarce embraces half we be.
 Shame, to stand in his creation
 And doubt truth's sufficiency!
 To think God's song unexcelling
 The poor tales of our own telling—
 When Pan is dead.

XXXVIII.

What is true and just and honest,
 What is lovely, what is pure,
 All of praise that hath admonisht,
 All of virtue shall endure,—
 These are themes for poets' uses,
 Stirring nobler than the Muses,
 Ere Pan was dead.

XXXIX.

O brave poets, keep back nothing,
 Nor mix falsehood with the whole;
 Look up Godward; speak the truth in
 Worthy song from earnest soul;
 Hold in high poetic duty
 Truest truth the fairest beauty!
 Pan, Pan, is dead.

PSYCHE AND PAN.

METAMORPH., LIB. V.

THE gentle River, in her Cupid's honor,
 Because he used to warm the very wave,
 Did ripple aside, instead of closing on her,
 And cast up Psyche, with a reflux brave,

Upon the flowery bank, all sad and sinning.
 Then Pan, the rural god, by chance was leaning
 Along the brow of waters as they wound,
 Kissing the reed-nymph till she sank to ground
 And teaching, without knowledge of the meaning,
 To run her voice in music after his
 Down many a shifting note (the goats around,
 In wandering pasture and most leaping bliss,
 Drawn on to crop the river's flowery hair).
 And as the hoary god beheld her there,
 The poor, worn, fainting Psyche! knowing all
 The grief she suffered, he did gently call
 Her name, and softly comfort her despair:—
 "O wise, fair lady! I am rough and rude,
 And yet experienced through my weary age;
 And if I read aright, as soothsayer should,
 Thy faltering steps of heavy pilgrimage,
 Thy paleness, deep as snow we cannot see
 The roses through,—thy sighs of quick returning,
 Thine eyes that seem themselves two souls in mourning,—
 Thou lovest, girl, too well, and bitterly!
 But hear me: rush no more to a headlong fall:
 Seek no more deaths! leave wail, lay sorrow down,
 And pray the sovran god; and use withal
 Such prayer as best may suit a tender youth,
 Well pleased to bend to flatteries from thy mouth,
 And feel them stir the myrtle of his crown."

 —So spake the shepherd-god; and answer none
 Gave Psyche in return; but silently
 She did him homage with a bended knee,
 And took the onward path.

THE CRY OF THE CHILDREN.

I.

Do ye hear the children weeping, O my brothers,
 Ere the sorrow comes with years?
 They are leaning their young heads against their mothers,
 And *that* cannot stop their tears.

The young lambs are bleating in the meadows;
The young birds are chirping in the nest;
The young fawns are playing with the shadows;
The young flowers are blowing toward the west;
But the young, young children, O my brothers!
They are weeping bitterly.
They are weeping in the playtime of the others,
In the country of the free.

II.

Do you question the young children in the sorrow,
Why their tears are falling so?
The old man may weep for his to-morrow
Which is lost in long ago;
The old tree is leafless in the forest;
The old year is ending in the frost;
The old wound, if stricken, is the sorest;
The old hope is hardest to be lost;
But the young, young children, O my brothers!
Do you ask them why they stand
Weeping sore before the bosoms of their mothers,
In our happy fatherland?

III.

They look up with their pale and sunken faces;
And their looks are sad to see,
For the man's hoary anguish draws and presses
Down the cheeks of infancy.
"Your old earth," they say, "is very dreary;
Our young feet," they say, "are very weak;
Few paces have we taken, yet are weary;
Our grave-rest is very far to seek.
Ask the aged why they weep, and not the children;
For the outside earth is cold,
And we young ones stand without in our bewildering,
And the graves are for the old.

IV.

"True," say the children, "it may happen
That we die before our time:

Little Alice died last year; her grave is shapen
Like a snowball in the rime.
We looked into the pit prepared to take her:
Was no room for any work in the close clay:
From the sleep wherein she lieth, none will wake her,
Crying, "Get up, little Alice! it is day!"
If you listen by that grave, in the sun and shower,
With your ear down, little Alice never cries,
Could we see her face, be sure we should not know her,
For the smile has time for growing in her eyes;
And merry go her moments, lulled and stilled in
The shroud by the kirk-chime.
It is good when it happens," say the children,
"That we die before our time."

V.

Alas, alas, the children! They are seeking
Death in life, as best to have.
They are binding up their hearts away from breaking,
With a cerement from the grave.
Go out, children, from the mine and from the city;
Sing out, children, as the little thrushes do;
Pluck your handfuls of the meadow-cowslips pretty;
Laugh aloud, to feel your fingers let them through.
But they answer, "Are your cowslips of the meadows
Like our weeds anear the mine?
Leave us quiet in the dark of the coal-shadows,
From your pleasures fair and fine.

VI.

"For Oh!" say the children, "we are weary,
And we cannot run or leap:
If we cared for any meadows, it were merely
To drop down in them, and sleep.
Our knees tremble sorely in the stooping;
We fall upon our faces, trying to go;
And, underneath our heavy eyelids drooping.
The reddest flower would look as pale as snow;

For all day we drag our burden tiring,
Through the coal-dark underground;
Or all day we drive the wheels of iron
In the factories, round and round.

VII.

“For all day the wheels are droning, turning;
Their wind comes in our faces,
Till our hearts turn, our heads with pulses burning,
And the walls turn in their places.
Turns the sky in the high window blank and reeling,
Turns the long light that drops adown the wall,
Turn the black flies that crawl along the ceiling,—
All are turning, all the day, and we with all.
And all day the iron wheels are droning,
And sometimes we would pray,
‘O ye wheels’ (breaking out in a mad moaning),
‘Stop! be silent for to-day!’”

VIII.

Ay, be silent! Let them hear each other breathing
For a moment, mouth to mouth;
Let them touch each other's hands, in a fresh wreathing
Of their tender human youth;
Let them feel that this cold metallic motion
Is not all the life God fashions or reveals:
Let them prove their living souls against the motion
That they live in you, or under you, O wheels!
Still, all day, the iron wheels go onward,
Grinding life down from its mark;
And the children's souls which God is calling sunward,
Spin on blindly in the dark.

IX.

Now tell the poor young children, O my brothers,
To look up to Him, and pray;
So the blessed One who blesseth all the others
Will bless them another day.

They answer, "Who is God, that he should hear us
 While the rushing of the iron wheels is stirred?
 When we sob aloud, the human creatures near us
 Pass by, hearing not, or answer not a word;
 And *we* hear not (for the wheels in their resounding)
 Strangers speaking at the door.
 Is it likely God, with angels singing round him,
 Hears our weeping any more?"

X.

"Two words, indeed, of praying we remember;
 And at midnight's hour of harm,
 'Our Father,' looking upward in the chamber,
 We say softly for a charm.
 We know no other words except 'Our Father';
 And we think, that, in some pause of angels' song,
 God may pluck them with the silence sweet to gather,
 And hold both within his right hand, which is strong.
 'Our Father!' If he heard us, he would surely
 (For they call him good and mild)
 Answer, smiling down the steep world very purely,
 'Come and rest with me, my child.'

XI.

"But no!" say the children, weeping faster,
 "He is speechless as a stone;
 And they tell us, of his image is the master
 Who commands us to work on.
 Go to!" say the children,—“up in heaven,
 Dark, wheel-like, turning clouds are all we find.
 Do not mock us: grief has made us unbelieving:
 We look up for God; but tears have made us blind.”
 Do you hear the children weeping and disproving,
 O my brothers, what we preach?
 For God's possible is taught by his world's loving—
 And the children doubt of each.

XII.

And well may the children weep before you!
 They are weary ere they run;
 They have never seen the sunshine, nor the glory
 Which is brighter than the sun.

They know the grief of man, without its wisdom;
 They sink in man's despair, without its calm;
 Are slaves without the liberty in Christdom;
 Are martyrs, by the pang without the palm:
 Are worn as if with age, yet unretrievingly
 The harvest of its memories cannot reap;
 Are orphans of the earthly love and heavenly—
 Let them weep! let them weep!

XIII.

They look up with their pale and sunken faces,
 And their look is dread to see.
 For they mind you of their angels in high places,
 With eyes turned on Deity.
 "How long," they say, "how long, O cruel nation,
 Will you stand, to move the world on a child's heart,—
 Stifle down with a mailed heel its palpitation,
 And tread onward to your throne amid the mart?
 Our blood splashes upward, O gold-heaper,
 And your purple shows your path!
 But the child's sob in the silence curses deeper
 Than the strong man in his wrath."

THE FORCED RECRUIT.

SOLFERINO, 1859.

I.

In the ranks of the Austrian you found him,
 He died with his face to you all;
 Yet bury him here where around him,
 You honor your bravest that fall.

II.

Venetian, fair-haired and slender,
 He lies shot to death in his youth,
 With a smile on his lips over-tender
 For any mere soldier's dead mouth.

III.

No stranger, and yet not a traitor,
Though alien the cloth on his breast,
Underneath it how seldom a greater
Young heart has a shot sent to rest!

IV.

By your enemy tortured and goaded
To march with them, stand in their file,
His musket (see) never was loaded,
He facing your guns with that smile!

V.

As orphans yearn on to their mothers,
He yearned to your patriot bands;—
“Let me die for our Italy, brothers,
If not in your ranks, by your hands!

VI.

“Aim straightly, fire steadily! spare me
A ball in the body which may
Deliver my heart here, and tear me
This badge of the Austrian away!”

VII.

So thought he, so died he this morning.
What then? many others have died.
Aye, but easy for men to die scorning
The death-stroke who fought side by side—

VIII.

One tricolor floating above them;
Struck down 'mid triumphant acclaims
Of an Italy rescued to love them
And blazon the brass with their names.

IX.

But he, without witness or honor,
 Mixed, shamed in his country's regard,
 With the tyrants who marched in upon her,
 Died faithful and passive: 'twas hard.

X.

'Twas sublime. In a cruel restriction
 Cut off from the guerdon of sons,
 With most filial obedience, conviction,
 His soul kissed the lips of her guns.

XI.

That moves you? Nay, grudge not to show it,
 While digging a grave for him here:
 The others who died, says your poet,
 Have the glory,—let *him* have a tear.

SONNETS FROM THE PORTUGUESE.

I THOUGHT once how Theocritus had sung
 Of the sweet years, the dear and wished-for years,
 Who each one in a gracious hand appears
 To bear a gift for mortals, old or young;
 And, as I mused it in his antique tongue,
 I saw in gradual vision, through my tears,
 The sweet, sad years, the melancholy years,
 Those of my own life, who by turns had flung
 A shadow across me. Straightway I was 'ware,
 So weeping, how a mystic shape did move
 Behind me, and drew me backward by the hair;
 And a voice said in mastery, while I strove,
 "Guess now who holds thee?"—"Death," I said. But there
 The silver answer rang, "Not Death, but Love."

THOU hast thy calling to some palace-floor,
 Most gracious singer of high poems, where
 The dancers will break footing, from the care
 Of watching up thy pregnant lips for more.
 And dost thou lift this house's latch too poor

For hand of thine? and canst thou think, and bear
To let thy music drop here unaware
In folds of golden fulness at my door?
Look up, and see the casement broken in,
The bats and owlets builders in the roof!
My cricket chirps against thy mandolin.
Hush, call no echo up in further proof
Of desolation! There's a voice within
That weeps . . . as thou must sing . . . alone, aloof.

YET love, mere love, is beautiful indeed,
And worthy of acceptance. Fire is bright
Let temple burn, or flax: an equal light
Leaps in the flame from cedar-plank or weed:
And love is fire. And when I say at need
I love thee . . . mark! . . . *I love thee*—in thy sight
I stand transfigured, glorified aright,
With conscience of the new rays that proceed
Out of my face toward thine. There's nothing low
In love, when love the lowest: meanest creatures
Who love God, God accepts while loving so.
And what I *feel* across the inferior features
Of what I *am*, doth flash itself, and show
How that great work of love enhances Nature's.

AND yet, because thou overcomest so,
Because thou art more noble, and like a king,
Thou canst prevail against my fears, and fling
Thy purple round me, till my heart shall grow
Too close against thine heart henceforth to know
How it shook when alone. Why, conquering
May prove as lordly and complete a thing
In lifting upward as in crushing low!
And, as a vanquished soldier yields his sword
To one who lifts him from the bloody earth,
Even so, belovèd, I at last record,
Here ends my strife. If *thou* invite me forth,
I rise above abasement at the word.
Make thy love larger to enlarge my worth.

BECAUSE thou hast the power, and own'st the grace,
To look through and behind this mask of me,
(Against which years have beat thus blanchingly
With their rains), and behold my soul's true face,
The dim and weary witness of life's race;
Because thou hast the faith and love to see,
Through that same soul's distracting lethargy,
The patient angel waiting for a place
In the new heavens; because nor sin nor woe,
Nor God's infliction, nor death's neighborhood,
Nor all which others, viewing, turn to go,
Nor all which makes me tired of all, self-viewed,—
Nothing repels thee, . . . dearest, teach me so
To pour out gratitude, as thou dost, good!

BELOVED, thou hast brought me many flowers
Plucked in the garden all the summer through
And winter; and it seemed as if they grew
In this close room, nor missed the sun and showers.
So, in the like name of that love of ours,
Take back these thoughts which here unfolded too,
And which on warm and cold days I withdrew
From my heart's ground. Indeed, those beds and bowers
Be overgrown with bitter weeds and rue,
And wait thy weeding; yet here's eglantine,
Here's ivy! Take them, as I used to do
Thy flowers, and keep them where they shall not pine.
Instruct thine eyes to keep their color true,
And tell thy soul their roots are left in mine.

A SELECTION FROM CASA GUIDI WINDOWS.

THE sun strikes through the windows, up the floor;
Stand out in it, my own young Florentine,
Not two years old, and let me see thee more!
It grows along thy amber curls, to shine
Brighter than elsewhere. Now, look straight before,
And fix thy brave blue English eyes on mine.
And from my soul, which fronts the future so,

With unabashed and unabated gaze,
Teach me to hope for, what the angels know
When they smile clear as thou dost, down God's ways
With just alighted feet, between the snow
And snowdrops, where a little lamb may graze,
Thou hast no fear, my lamb, about the road,
Albeit in our vain-glory we assume
That, less than we have, thou hast learnt of God.
Stand out, my blue-eyed prophet!—thou to whom
The earliest world-day light that ever flowed,
Through Casa Guidi windows chanced to come!
Now shake the glittering nimbus of thy hair,
And be God's witness that the elemental
New springs of life are gushing everywhere
To cleanse the water-courses, and prevent all
Concrete obstructions which infest the air!
That earth's alive, and gentle or ungentle
Motions within her signify but growth!—
The ground swells greenest o'er the laboring moles.

Howe'er the uneasy world is vexed and wroth,
Young children, lifted high on parent souls,
Look round them with a smile upon the mouth,
And take for music every bell that tolls;
(WHO said we should be better if like these?)
But *we* sit murmuring for the future, though
Posterity is smiling on our knees,
Convicting us of folly. Let us go—
We will trust God. The blank interstices
Men take for ruins, he will build into
With pillared marbles rare, or knit across
With generous arches, till the fane's complete.
This world has no perdition, if some loss.

Such cheer I gather from thy smiling, sweet!
The selfsame cherub-faces which emboss
The Veil, lean inward to the Mercy-seat.

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